A Case Study of the Implementation of Experiential Education in Yukon K-12 Schools

Jarod R. Chinnick, HBOR, BA Geography

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Supervisor: Mary Breunig, PhD

Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, Brock University

St. Catharines, Ontario

Abstract

This qualitative case study explored the process of implementing Experiential Education (EXED) in Yukon Territory Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) schools with a particular focus on investigating: (a) understandings of EXED and the drivers behind its implementation, (b) factors contributing to EXED's suitability for Yukon schools, and (c) factors supporting and challenging the implementation of EXED in Yukon schools. Data collection involved interviews with Yukon Department of Education (YDE) staff members, principals and teachers, document collection, and reflective note collection. Findings indicated that EXED was understood as more of a methodology than a philosophy for teaching and learning. EXED implementation was primarily driven by bottom-up (school/ teacher) initiatives and was secondarily supported by top-down (YDE) efforts. The process of implementation was supported by three main factors and was challenged primarily by six factors. The results also pointed to three factors that made EXED suitable for implementation in Yukon schools.

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Chapter 1: Introduction

In November of 2006, during a break from work, I boarded a Greyhound bus to embark on a journey to visit a friend in the Yukon Territory of Northern Canada. Embarking on this three-week journey signaled the start of what was to become a much longer learning expedition. Finding myself hooked by the *lure of the Yukon,* I returned again in January of 2007 and stayed for the rest of the winter. Having returned home after that winter and finding myself feeling a strong urge to be back in the Yukon, I decided to return for a longer period of time and did so from October 2007 until August 2008. I was immersed in several learning environments during this time, working as: a dog-musher; a facilitator of an after-school indoor rock climbing program; a farm laborer; and a log-home builder. I began to hear stories of some of the unique methods for teaching and learning being used in the Yukon's Kindergarten-to-Grade 12 (K-12) schools, including biology programs that offered a Bison-hunt field trip component and geology programs that allowed students to learn both in the classroom and in the surrounding mountainous environment. During my time spent in the Yukon, I came to realize that, in a very real, practical and educational sense, the land, the community and the classrooms are all sites of learning for Yukon K-12 students.

I came home at the end of my third trip to the Yukon poised to start a more academic journey. I had chosen to begin a Master's thesis and needed to find a topic of interest. While I knew that I wanted to further explore the vista of experiential education (EXED) philosophy, it took a while for me to come realize that I could study those aforementioned examples of EXED in Yukon K-12 schools. A couple of months into the search for a topic, I came across a few pieces of Yukon Department of Education (YDE)

literature. The literature, in the form of YDE reports, stated, first, that the YDE recommends that opportunities for EXED programming should exist in all Yukon schools (Belanger, Bremner & Lee, 2008; Education Reform Project, 2007). The documents also clarified that EXED is utilized predominantly in Wood Street School programs and to a lesser degree in regular K-12 school settings. The Wood Street School offers EXED-based integrated studies programs for high school students in a school setting that is separate from regular high school settings in Yukon (Belanger, Bremner & Lee, 2008; Education Reform Project, 2007).

These reports also highlighted that stakeholders, including teachers, students, administrators and parents expressed that EXED, as a teaching and learning philosophy, is beneficial for Yukon K-12 students and should be part of all students' learning experiences (Belanger, Bremner & Lee, 2008; Education Reform Project, 2007). I began to see that I could pursue an opportunity to explore the process of EXED implementation in Yukon K-12 schools from a non-Wood-Street-School perspective. The problem, the purpose and the objectives of this study began to surface as I realized that I could explore this case from a number of viewpoints to gain a varied perspective of the phenomenon.

I initially wondered about the factors that had supported and allowed EXED to become accepted and utilized in some Yukon learning environments. In addition, I wondered about the factors that may have acted as barriers to EXED's implementation in other parts of the Yukon K-12 school system. Out of these first questions, the purpose started to form. The purpose of this case study was to explore and describe the process of implementing experiential education in Yukon K-12 schools with a particular focus on illuminating the supporting and the challenging factors YDE staff members, teachers and

principals experience as they endeavor to implement their own vision and the YDE's vision for offering experiential education in Yukon K-12 schools.

This next section will explore the purpose in more depth identifying the study objectives and the key research queries by first starting with a brief overview of the relevant literature. This section will additionally, enumerate the scope of the study and importance of the study and will conclude with a definition of key terms.

Experiential learning (EL) refers to a "step-wise process beginning with direct experience, followed by reflection, followed by learning" (Seaman, 2008, p. 3). Experiential education incorporates EL as its methodology and refers to "both a philosophy and a methodology in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills and clarify values," (AEE, 2009). Mainstream education (ME) is directed by criteria external to the learner, is characterized by standardized learning and testing that is based on normative values, and depends on knowledge and learning experiences that are compartmentalized (Lindsay & Ewert, 1999). When EXED philosophy is integrated into the ME environment in K-12 schools the learner has the potential to benefit in many ways, as various studies have pointed out (Blair, 2009; Byerly, 2001; Conrad & Hedin, 1981; Dillon et al., 2006; Weinbaum, Gregory, Wilkie, Hirsch & Fancsali, 1996). For example, EXED programming has the ability to: (a) enhance learners' social development (Blair; Byerly; Conrad & Hedin), (b) enhance intellectual development (Byerly; Conrad & Hedin), (c) increase curricular achievement (Blair), (d) contribute to behavioral improvement (Blair), and (c) enhance appreciation for the natural environment (Dillon et al.).

That said, the implementation of EXED into K-12 schools also has its limitations (Lindsay & Ewert, 1999; Millenbah & Millspaugh, 2003). While, in general, concepts are more thoroughly explored through EXED programming, learners often cover a more narrow breadth of content than in the ME classroom and, thus, have the potential to fall behind during standardized testing (Lindsay & Ewert; Millenbah & Millspaugh). As well, because the employment of EXED introduces new methodologies of learning and assessment into the classroom, learners may experience confusion and anxiety when EXED programming is first introduced (Millenbah & Millspaugh). A great deal of the effectiveness of EXED for a learner lies in the abilities of teachers and principals to find ways to be successful in offering EXED programming within an ME environment.

The body of research also indicates that the community of education providers including teachers and principals has certain strategies for being successful in offering EXED in K-12 schools and that a department of education plays a major role in this process (Byerly, 2001; Conrad & Hedin, 1981; Millenbah & Millspaugh, 2003; Weinbaum et al., 1996). These strategies include: (a) accessing more time for planning and collaboration with colleagues (Weinbaum et al.), (b) acquiring appropriate teacher training (Conrad & Hedin; Weinbaum et al.), (c) gaining support from the school board/ ministerial level (Byerly; Millenbah & Millspaugh), and (d) involving learners in the creation of curriculum (Millenbah & Millspaugh). It should be noted that the majority of the participants in the previously mentioned studies were teachers. Blair (2009) has identified the need for more queries into the perceptions of principals on how EXED can be successfully implemented into K-12 schools.

While much of the research recommends strategies for the successful implementation of EXED in K-12 schools, several studies have also indicated the challenges that teachers, principals and education departments face when implementing EXED (Blair, 2009; Byerly, 2001; Conrad & Hedin, 1981; Dillon et al., 2006; Jickling, 1991; Weinbaum et al., 1996). Dillon et al. (2006) have identified five challenges to implementing EXED programming in K-12 schools, including: "(a) fear and concern about health and safety, (b) teachers' lack of confidence in teaching outdoors, (c) school curriculum requirements, (d) shortages of time, resources and support, and (e) wider changes within and beyond the education sector" (p. 108). Blair, whose findings confirm those of Dillon et al., adds lack of personal interest as a major limitation for teachers in offering EXED programming. In addition, Blair cites limited capabilities and limited knowledge of EXED philosophy as other challenges for teachers.

The effects of a department of education and its employees having limited and/ or different knowledges and understandings related to EXED were of particular interest for this study. Experiential education and experiential learning are terms that have often been used interchangeably in educational circles (Itin, 1999; Roberts, 2008). Itin suggests that the increased acceptance of EXED into K-12 schools is stunted by the inability of those creating and of those delivering programs to articulate EXED as both a philosophy and methodology. The distinction between EL and EXED is not widely understood (Itin). Itin argues that researchers and pedagogues need to better understand this distinction and that perhaps, not fully understanding this distinction actually serves as a barrier to the offering of EXED programming in K-12 schools. Itin's argument represents a call-to-action for researchers to explore this apparent lack of understanding

as a barrier to the offering of EXED programming in K-12 schools. Ultimately, Itin advocates for the field of EXED to move toward the development and common understanding of an all-encompassing definition of EXED.

Roberts (2008) more recently argued that "current scholarship seems to utilize a 'common sense' notion of experience that ignores important distinctions, contradictions, and conflict embedded in the term" (p. 21). In building upon the ideas of Itin (1999), Roberts (2008) suggests that rather than seeking to define or to develop a common understanding of the field of "experiential theory" it should be celebrated for its variable threads and themes (p. 20). In other words, the field of experiential theory should continue to explore its multiple and sometimes contradictory meanings so as to try to make sense of how the variances are linked and why the "whole" can have such a profound effect (Roberts). Roberts analyzed the multitude of different theoretical positions related to experiential theory, from past and present, and, simply for presenting the ideas in a coherent manner, offers his conception of four broad variances within experiential theory (p. 21).

The first three variances include: (a) interactive experience, linked to pragmatist philosophy; (b) embodied experience, linked to Romanticism and phenomenology; and (c) experience as praxis, linked to critical theory (Roberts, 2008). Roberts then suggests that the three variances have been traditionally marginalized within ME by a fourth variation. This fourth sect, called neo-experientialism, is linked to efficiency, individual performance and consumerism. Roberts characterizes these learning experiences as "tightly bounded (in both space and time), rationally constructed, and efficiently controlled. 'Normal' classroom or school activity stops and experiential activity then

begins for a bounded and specific timeframe" (p. 29). In essence, superficial, consumptive and uncritical experiences are offered in neatly structured packages that often deny learners the opportunity for creation, participation and in-depth reflection (Roberts).

Roberts' (2008) call to action then entails not a coming together to form an all-encompassing understanding as Itin (1999) suggested but, rather, a coming together of the community of educators and scholars who rely on the varied forms of experience in education to debate the assumptions and intentions of the multiple variations. This has the potential for new alliances to be formed between the many groups of educators who use "experience" in education in different ways. In addition, "it can create the opportunity to discuss more forcefully the role experiential education has within the current school reform zeitgeist and the role it could and should play in the future" (Roberts, p. 33). Thus, Roberts makes a request for more research that focuses on the aforementioned on-going debate amongst educators.

Specific to Yukon K-12 schools, research on EXED is so limited that this study has the potential to contribute to a new discourse on EXED implementation in Yukon schools. Two of the three known related studies have their focus on Wood Street School EXED programming (Comishin & Potter, 1995; Jickling, 1991; O'Conner, 2008). Jickling, however, conducted a study in which he made queries into environmental education's place in Yukon K-12 schools. Teachers described that they had observed various benefits for the learner when EXED-based environmental education programs were offered in the K-12 school setting including: (a) increased learner motivation, (b) opportunities for various teaching and learning methods to be used, and (c) the ability of

learners to grasp concepts more readily. In order to be successful, teachers expressed that new curriculum materials, resource personnel, teacher collaboration time and professional development would have to be provided. In contrast, teachers explained that some students' learning was limited when the theory was not overtly connected to the learning experience. Teachers also described that class sizes and extra costs acted as challenges to offering EXED-based environmental education. The implementation of EXED into K-12 schools can be considered as a process of educational change.

According to Michael Fullan (2001), the process of educational change could superficially include the use of new or revised materials, teaching approaches and/ or the alteration of beliefs. He adds though, "reform is not just putting into place the latest policy. It means changing the cultures of the classrooms, the schools, the districts, the universities, and so on" (p. 7). McNeal and Christy (2001) suggest that educational change is founded on the notion that it "is a multilevel process with a role for all stakeholders within the system" (p. 4). McNeal and Christy contribute another characteristic to the topic by suggesting that often change occurs simultaneously on a number of levels but not necessarily in coordination. In another article, Fullan (1994) puts forth that educational change is generally driven from either the top-down, the bottom-up or a combination of both directions.

A few studies have pointed to the fact that top-down strategies, when used in isolation, rarely succeed in achieving their prescribed goals (Berman & McLauglin, 1977; Goodlad, 1992; Sarason, 1990; Wilson & Corbett, 1990). At the other end of the scale, several authors have suggested that approaches that employ bottom-up strategies solely are often unsuccessful on some level (Fullan, 2001; Taylor & Teddlie, 1992). Fullan

(1998) hypothetically suggests that for educational change to be successful, top-down and bottom-up strategies need to be coordinated in a manner that encourages the development of rapport between the two levels. He calls for more research in this area (Fullan).

McNeal and Christy (2001) expressed that educational change is most effective when the change reflects localized needs of the school. Place-based education considers the needs and conditions of the local environment in determining "what" should be taught and "how" it should be taught (Kemp, 2006; Starnes, 2000; Woodhouse, 2001). A definition of place-based education might "root the learning experience in the location of the learner- the home, the backyard, the school grounds, the community, the bioregion- the place the learner inhabits. A place-based pedagogy approaches the individual as part of a cultural, political, social and biological context- an ecology" (Woodhouse, 2001, p. 1).

Theobald and Nachtigal (1995) suggest that a focus on place not only aids in reconnecting the student to community, it also acts as a process of community and school renewal. They point out that students have a chance to interact with their community which leads to renewal, "first, by making learning more experiential and more powerful, and second, by providing youth with an ability to understand who they might be in the world" (p. 23).

Takano, Higgins and McLaughlin (2009) offer an example of this in their study of place-based education with/in a school in rural Alaska. The community and students benefited when a change was made to place the local culture's subsistence living activities as the focus of the school curriculum. Community members who helped teach the courses and the students reconstructed their identities as a result of becoming

reacquainted with their traditions. In addition, attendance rates improved and "former drop-outs" returned to school. In contrast, a couple of challenges were encountered including apprehensive parents worried about the safety of their child and apprehensive students concerned about their safety due to a lack of personal experience with "on-the-land" activities (Takano, Higgins and McLaughlin).

The purpose of the study was derived from the apparent need for more research in the areas previously mentioned and from my initial questioning regarding the ways in which the implementation of EXED is affected.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore and describe the process of implementing experiential education in Yukon K-12 schools with a particular focus on illuminating the supporting and the challenging factors YDE staff members, teachers and principals experience as they endeavor to implement their own vision and the YDE's vision for offering experiential education in Yukon K-12 schools. This study was guided by five main research questions.

Research Questions

1. What are the YDE teachers', principals', and staff members' understandings of experiential education? And, what are their perceptions regarding the driving forces behind the implementation of EXED?
2. What factors contribute to EXED's suitability for Yukon Schools?
3. How is the YDE facilitating the implementation of experiential education in K-12 schools? And, what other factors are supporting the implementation of EXED?

4. What are the factors that challenge YDE staff members', teachers' and principals' implementation of EXED in K-12 schools?
5. How is the process of implementing EXED affected by the supporting and challenging factors?

Scope of Study

The YDE and its 29 schools serve 5100 K-12 students in the Yukon Territory of Northern Canada (Yukon Government, 2008). The majority of students attend schools that are either in or are in close proximity to Whitehorse, the Territory's capital city (Yukon Government, 2008). This qualitative case study focused its queries on the Yukon education system as a whole and, for the purposes of interviewing teachers and principals, on two schools within the Whitehorse area. One of these schools was a high school and the other an elementary school. Three staff members from the YDE were also interviewed. Documents and reports from the YDE were analyzed and my own reflective notes helped to guide the process of data analysis. Data collection for this study took place between November, 2009 and April, 2010 (see Appendix A). I have further explained the research methods in chapter 3.

Importance of the Study

There are a number of reasons why this study is important and timely to both practice and theory. First and foremost, identifying and exploring the successes and challenges of implementing EXED into Yukon K-12 schools has the potential to inform the EXED implementation practices of the wider community of educators. Second, the YDE may be better informed of the perceptions of this process of EXED implementation from the perspectives of teachers and principals. Third, exploring how the YDE

facilitates the implementation of EXED has the potential to inform the facilitation practices of other Educational Institutions. Ultimately, this study is timely due to the recent recommendations made in YDE documents to increase EXED programming (Belanger, Bremner & Lee, 2008; Education Reform Project, 2007). There would seem to be a sense of urgency to study the Yukon case given that such a variety of stakeholders have expressed their belief in the importance of EXED for Yukon learners. This sense of urgency can also be drawn from the findings of a pivotal piece of recent research, the Bondar Report. In brief, in addition to creating a comprehensive definition of environmental education for use in Ontario schools, the Bondar Report also made a number of recommendations, including increased funding, training and time allotments for outdoor education in Ontario schools. This is entirely relevant to this study given that a great deal of the EXED programming in the Yukon is focused on outdoor and environmental education. In alignment with the YDE reports, the Bondar Report also recommends that learners have more opportunities to engage in outdoor and environmental education. Ultimately, it is my hope that the YDE will draw upon the results of this study to improve its capacity to facilitate the implementation of EXED in Yukon schools and, ultimately, to allow more of Yukon's K-12 students to have opportunities for EXED programming in their classrooms.

Underlying Assumptions

1. Experiential education is a valuable approach to teaching and learning and provides several direct and indirect benefits for the learner, educator and the broader community.

2. Teachers, principals and YDE staff members have, to the best of their abilities, reported an accurate depiction of their experiences of the process of implementing EXED in Yukon schools.
3. Because this study only queried two of a possible 29 school sites, the results are not generalizable. However, the results may have broader implications in that the study could add to the local and national discussion and debate about implementation of EXED in K-12 schools.
4. This study could have been further enriched by observing or interviewing students. However, this study was tempered by very practical, "lived" constraints, including available resources and, thus, only explored the lived experiences of select teachers, principals and YDE staff members.
5. Reflexivity, as Willis (1998) suggests, involves a process of identifying the researchers influence on the research design and the results. Thus, I believe that one of the most important strategies in communicating the chosen research design was to be transparent about how and why decisions were made. In doing so, I was able to reveal my own biases and assumptions so as to further contextualize this study.

Definition of Terms

The definition of the following terms provide for a place to start the discussion of some of this study's key topics.

Educator: The educator is often seen as the guide of a learning experience. This person serves as the guide because he has often had a greater breadth and depth of experience than the learner (Dewey, 1938). The educator can also become the learner and vice versa.

Educational Change: Fundamentally, educational change offers an opportunity to change ideologies and "the cultures of the classrooms, the schools, the districts, the universities, and so on" (Fullan, 2001, p. 7). Educational change may, for example, involve the use of new or revised materials and teaching approaches and/ or the alteration of beliefs (Fullan, 1994). It is a multi-level process in which all stakeholders may, at some time, play a role (McNeal & Christy, 2001).

Experiential Education: Experiential education is "both a philosophy and a methodology in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills and clarify values" (AEE, 2009)

Experiential Learning: Experiential learning is a "step-wise process beginning with direct experience, followed by reflection, followed by learning" (Seaman, 2008, p. 3).

Learner: There is no one definition of a learner. A learner could be a student or a participant and is often the one being guided through the learning experience. The learner can also become the educator and vice versa (AEE, 2009).

Mainstream Education: Lindsay and Ewert (1999) suggest that mainstream education is the predominant philosophy and methodology employed in the Public Education System today. Mainstream education is directed by criteria external to the learner, is characterized by standardized learning and testing that is based on normative values, and depends on knowledge and learning experiences that are compartmentalized (Lindsay & Ewert).

Pedagogy: The study of the combined assumptions regarding how one teaches, what is being taught and how one learns (McLaren, 2003).

Place-based Education: A definition of place-based education might "root the learning experience in the location of the learner- the home, the backyard, the school grounds, the community, the bioregion- the place the learner inhabits. A place-based pedagogy approaches the individual as part of a cultural, political, social and biological context- an ecology" (Woodhouse, 2001, p. 1).

Outward Bound Canada: Founded in 1969, Outward Bound Canada is a non-profit provider of adventure-based wilderness expeditions for a variety of age groups. The philosophy of Outward Bound Canada is based upon the works of Kurt Hahn who, in 1941 created the first Outward Bound School in the UK.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter will serve to provide background information on the subjects related to the research topic and the research questions. This section will also help to clarify the need for and importance of this research study by enumerating gaps in the literature. Additionally, this section will highlight details about the specific investigation query. First, this chapter will explore the philosophy of experiential education (EXED), beginning with a brief narrative of my own experiences with this philosophy. This will be followed by an examination of experiential education in K-12 schools and then the role of experiential education in Yukon K-12 schools will be explored. Next, a brief overview of the theory of educational change is presented. Finally, I present literature related to place-based education.

Experiential Education

Six years ago, I was introduced to the theory of Experiential Educaiton (EXED) in a second year outdoor and experiential education class at Lakehead University. I was in an Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Tourism undergraduate program at the time. I came to realize that experiential learning (EL) had always been a part of my life. Though I excelled in an academic setting that encouraged learning through reading, writing and arithmetic, I was also aware of the power of my experiences outside of school (and the experiences, though limited, I had in school). As a somewhat shy child, I learned to move through and adapt to my world via a process of "wondering, doing and thinking". I found that the learning that resulted from having to adapt could be applied to the classroom setting. For example, it was easy to grasp classroom-based logic learning because I had developed my problem solving abilities through farm-based experiences

such as stacking bales of hay on a wagon as efficiently as possible. As well, throughout my time in an undergraduate University program, I found that I was learning just as much outside of school, through experiences in the wilderness, as I was learning in class. Neither place of learning was more important than the other. The simple fact is that each became so much more meaningful because of the existence of the other. I was able to reflect upon my experiences as I came to know the supporting theory in the classroom. These concepts of experience and reflection are the building blocks of EL (Kolb, 1984). Experiential education, encompassing EL, was first introduced to me in that Experiential Education course that I took eight years ago at University. In learning the theory behind the philosophy of EXED, I had the desire to move beyond my role just as a learner into the role of a facilitator of educational experiences.

With this goal in mind, I took opportunities to develop my facilitation skills. Initially, I worked for summer camps for a few years as a high ropes course instructor, as a canoeing guide and as a hiking guide. These experiences allowed me to begin to realize the ways in which I desired to educate and to try out the role of "educator in the wilderness" for the first time. I continued to develop my understanding of EXED theory in more advanced classes at Lakehead University. Upon graduating, I took a job with Outward Bound Canada as an educator in the outdoors. Again, I had the chance to share experiences with learners on semi-structured, wilderness, canoe and hiking expeditions. It was intriguing to find that at each of the different jobs, EXED was replaced by some other buzzword such as outdoor education or adventure education to describe the job's teaching philosophy. I came to realize that while I knew EXED in theory, there was

somewhat of an inconsistency in the language that was used regarding experiential education in real-world practice.

Through my process of experientially discovering EXED, I came to realize the importance of focusing experiences and reflections with an intended end in mind. Essentially, I learned to be purposeful in my work and realized that one must have goals in mind in order to be purposeful. That realization has been the focus of my practice lately as a teaching assistant at Brock University. Most recently, I had the opportunity to co-teach an undergraduate course with a supportive mentor on the topic of EXED philosophy. Through this process I was able to explore and play with the language with which I wanted to talk about EXED.

Experiential education and experiential learning are terms that have often been used interchangeably in educational circles (Itin, 1999). For example, Itin states that, depending upon their area of specialization, practitioners and theorists alike often refer to EXED and EL in other terms such as, outdoor education, field work, internships, previous work experience, adventure education, environmental education, vocational education, field trips, lab work, simulations or games (Wurdinger, 1995; Luckmann, 1996; Itin, 1999). In addition, there are multiple and varied definitions of EXED and EL (Breunig, 2009; Itin, 1999; Joplin, 1981; Kolb, 1984; Luckman, 1996).

Itin (1999) claims that EXED suffers from a case of multiple identities. This makes for discussion surrounding the topic a very difficult process because each of the various ideas of EXED and EL are in fact quite distinctive on their own. In recognition of this confusion of terms, I will distinguish between the two conceptually different ideas of EXED and of EL in this section by framing the concepts within some of the more

popular definitions and explanations. Within this framing exercise I will offer the working definitions of EXED and EL that have been employed for the purposes of this study. To me, it is important to gaze upon the key figures that have influenced the development of present day EXED theory in attempting to understand this philosophy and develop these definitions. I will start by shedding light upon those people who were at the roots of shaping the EXED movement we know today.

Roots of the Experiential Education Movement.

The historical roots of EXED are often traced back to the works of John Dewey (Adkins & Simmons, 2002; Foster & Linney, 2007; Glassman, 2001; Itin, 1999; Katula & Threnhauser, 1999; Lund, 1997, Breunig, 2009). Dewey was concerned with the state of education in the early 1900s (Katula & Threnhauser). He noticed that students were being treated as mere receptacles of information. Essentially, information about the world was to be accumulated from the word of the teacher (Katula & Threnhauser). In seeing how young people were learning in the classroom, Dewey (1916; 1938) posited that perhaps learners lacked the experience necessary to apply the skills and knowledge they were accumulating in school. For Dewey, this conclusion about learners lacking essential experiences compelled him to consider what might be missing from school systems and educators' conceptions about teaching and learning. Dewey's response was to propose EXED as a philosophy that was to put the learner's active engagement in the learning process as a central tenet (Katula & Threnhauser).

For John Dewey, (1938) EXED philosophy, distinct from the educational philosophy at the time, suggested that educators took stock of learners' past experiences. In doing so, the educator could then progressively organize subject matter so as to

provide learners with new experiences that led to new learning through a reflective process. In other words, he believed that learning was a continuous process of self-modification and that through the processes of experiencing and reflecting, one could alter the quality of subsequent experiences (Dewey). To Dewey, this way of educating had the potential to foster the learner's participation in a democratic society and this participation in society represented the ultimate aim of education.

Dewey was also a spokesperson for the progressive education movement of the 19th century (Lund, 1997). Dewey (1938) made the distinction that not all experiences are educative and criticized the progressive movement for encouraging too much freedom for the learner. Educative experiences are those that lead to further growth of the individual (Dewey, 1938). The impact of Dewey's work reached beyond the classroom. His work was adapted to situations where the classroom became the mountains or the seas, as in the Outward Bound movement, a worldwide experiential education organization founded by Kurt Hahn (Lund, 1997).

Kurt Hahn was to England's progressive education movement as John Dewey was to America's progressive education movement (Itin, 1999). As the founder of the Outward Bound movement, and three other similar education programs, Hahn attributes many of his ideas to the original philosophies of Plato and certainly drew upon the works of Dewey (Lund, 1997; Itin, 1999; Raiola and O'Keefe, 1999). Like Plato, Hahn believed that the focus of a person's development should be to develop citizenship and a desire to serve the community (Itin, 1999). Thus, suggested Hahn, the ultimate aim of education should be the "nurturance of civic responsibility" (Warren & Loeffler, 2000, p. 85).

Hahn developed his ideas on education during an historical time (1930s) and in a place of political complexity (Lund, 1997). He was considered to be an outspoken opposition to the Nazi party in his home country of Germany in the 1930s. Hahn eventually left Germany seeking a better place to develop his educational philosophy. In 1941, Hahn was invited to Aberdovey, Wales to aid in the development of what would become the first Outward Bound School (Lund, 1997). Lawrence Holt worked with Hahn on this project. As an owner of a shipping business, Holt was concerned with the young men on his ships. He noticed that when one of his ships was attacked, it was often the older men that were surviving while the younger men perished. Holt saw the cause of this as a lack of character and spirit in the young men. Hahn saw this as an opportunity to develop a program in which young people could be educated not with just the intellect as a priority, but with the whole person in mind. Thus, Hahn saw it as the "foremost task of education to ensure the survival of these qualities: an enterprising curiosity, an undefeatable spirit, tenacity in pursuit, readiness for sensible self-denial, and above all, compassion" (HIOBS, 1990, p. 71).

Using the mountains and the seas as the classroom, Hahn used outdoor adventure experiences as a backdrop to work toward the achievement of educating the whole person (Breunig, 2009). Outward Bound Schools were introduced in North America in the early 1960s. The same lack of moral character and lack of spirit was noticed in the young people of North America at the time (Breunig, 2009). Thus, programs were offered that involved 8-12 participants working through challenging experiences, community service projects and individual periods of wilderness solitude (Lund, 1997). The majority of

programs are still mostly offered to young adults, though adult and corporate specific programs now exist as well (Lund).

While Hahn was based in Britain for the majority of his work with the Outward Bound programs, Paulo Freire was doing work in Brazil that would eventually contribute to the broader conceptualization of EXED (Itin, 1999). Freire (1994) engaged in a process of liberation and democratization while teaching adults to read. He believed that learning must be understood within its socio-political context in order for learners to become critical thinkers and, thus, better participants in a democratic society. Freire, like Dewey and Hahn, suggested that learning happens by making sense of our experiences through a reflective process.

The EXED movement evolved out of the foundational works of Dewey, Hahn, Freire and other notable contributors (Itin, 1999). According to Adkins and Simmons (2002), EXED emerged as a legitimate field of education in the early 1970's. However, as a result of the given political context in education, which is supportive of more traditional approaches such as standardized testing, EXED's reception as a philosophical approach is still in question (Adkins & Simmons). As a result of this, albeit somewhat tentative, recognition, the Association for Experiential Education (AEE) was formed in 1977. Today, AEE is a flagship institution that is dedicated to students, educators and practitioners (Itin). As an organization, the objectives of AEE are to connect educators around the world, to publish relevant research and resources, to enhance the quality of the philosophy and its practice through an accreditation program and to expand the recognition of EXED around the world (AEE, 2008).

While there are certainly more people and groups who have made contributions to the EXED movement, I have mentioned the most notable figures. A number of foundational ideas have been outlined and will be further expanded upon in the coming sections.

Experiential Learning and Experiential Education.

The differences between experiential learning and experiential education can be understood from a conceptual standpoint (Breunig, 2009). In essence, learning and education are different constructs (Itin, 1999). Learning can be understood as a change experience for an individual while education refers to the transactive process between a learner and educator (Itin). Experiential learning, when taken on its own, comprises the methodological component of experiential education (Breunig). In other words, EL refers to the ***way*** in which one learns from experience. Experiential education, on the other hand, refers to a philosophy of education in which the learner and the educator engage in a purposeful and intentional learning experience (AEE, 2009). This section will serve to further explore and define EL and EXED as different concepts. A number of theoretical models for understanding the experiential learning process have been developed and these models will first be explored (Knapp, 1992). This will be followed by a much more in-depth review of EXED as a philosophy.

Theoretical models of Experiential Learning.

According to Jayson Seaman (2008), EL is defined as a, "step-wise process beginning with direct experience, followed by reflection, followed by learning" (p. 3). This definition has its roots in a history of EL models. The theoretical models of experiential learning began to take form amidst changing educational and social trends

during the 1960s and 1970s and continued to develop through the 1980s. I will describe a few of the more popular theoretical models of EL and will conclude this section by highlighting what is, perhaps, the most influential of EL models in Kolb's (1984) EL Cycle.

Joplin (1981) posits that all learning is experiential and that learning occurs when an individual identifies with, interacts with and forms a relationship with a subject. This process of learning can be understood using an experiential model (Joplin). According to Joplin, experiential programs begin with two intentions: (a) to provide a learner with an experience, and (b) to facilitate reflection on that experience. Essentially, "experience alone is insufficient to be called experiential education, and it is the reflection process which turns experience into experiential education" (Joplin, 1981, p. 17). Joplin's five-stage model has challenging action, or experience, as its focal point. This challenging action begins with a focusing stage and is concluded with a debriefing stage. Feedback and support comprise the catalyst stages in the EL process. This model is seen as a cycle in that the learner is always following the debrief phase with the focus phase as he moves toward the next challenging action with fluidity (Joplin).

In a similar fashion, Knapp (1992) describes a five-stage cyclical EL model that was developed by Jones and Pfeiffer. The five stages of this model include: "(a) experiencing – involvement in the world; (b) publishing – the sharing of observations, feelings or other reactions; (c) processing – systematic examination of patterns and dynamics that emerge from the publication step; (d) generalizing – takes the meanings that emerge from the previous step and relates them to life; and (e) applying – implications and principles are put to use in actual situations" (Knapp, 1992, p. 37). This

cycle is quite similar to Joplin's model in that as the new experience is undertaken, the cycle begins anew (Knapp).

Stehno (1986) suggested that, in general, the popularized models of EL are quite similar when broken down into their essential elements. Stehno considered seven models of EL and describes that each includes four common elements: (a) action that creates an experience, (b) reflection on the action and experience, (c) abstractions drawn from the reflection, and (d) application of the abstraction to a new experience or action. Presumably, the individual can direct all these steps. Therefore, EL is the activity of the learner and does not necessarily require an educator (Itin, 1999). This places the responsibility for learning solely on the individual.

Experiential Learning Cycle.

For the purposes of this study, EL, as the methodological component of EXED, will be described using Kolb's experiential learning cycle. This model has been chosen as the guiding framework simply because it presents the concepts of the previous section in a coherent and summarizing manner. Kolb (1984) suggests that the EL method can be understood as a cyclical process. First, Kolb (1984) defines experiential education as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (p. 38). The experiential learning cycle (see Figure 1) consists of a four step process: (a) active learner involvement in a meaningful and challenging experience (concrete experience), (b) reflection upon the experience individually and in a group to find meaning (reflective observation), (c) drawing of logical conclusions and the development of new knowledge about the world (abstract conceptualization), and (d) application and

testing of this knowledge in new concrete experiences (active experimentation) (Breunig, 2009; Knapp, 1992; Svinicki & Dixon, 1987).

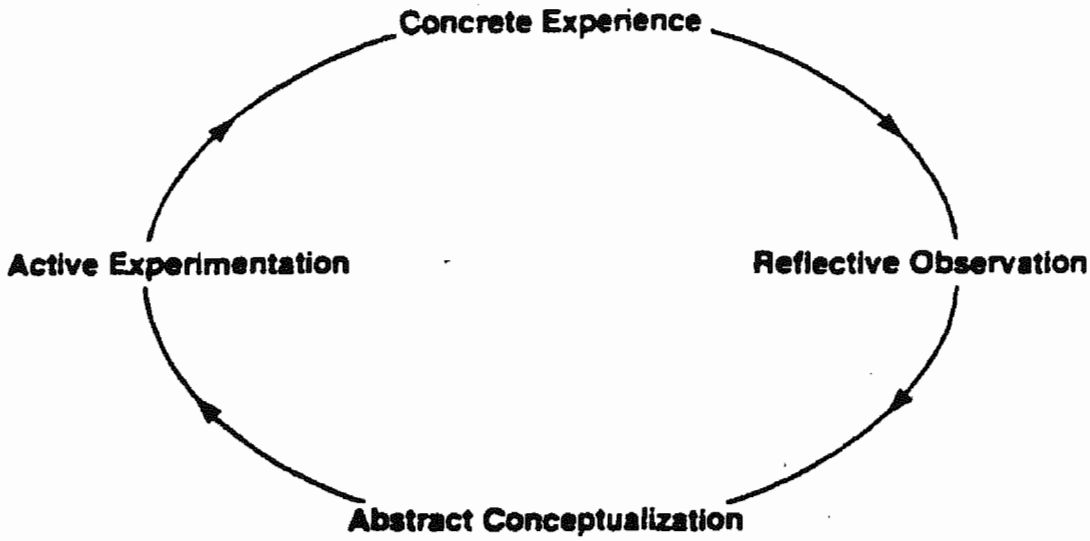

Figure 1. Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle (Svinicki and Dixon, 1987).

This working definition has served to contextualize the methodological component of EXED as it is referred to for the remainder of this study. In addition, Kolb's model has helped to guide the question forming aspect of the research design, has assisted in informing this study's propositions and has been utilized as a lens through which the data has been analyzed and discussed. While this model has been relied upon as an important and useful research design and analysis tool, I also wish to point out its distinctive and inherent limitation for use in this study.

Kolb's model offers a confident and structured portrayal of the process of experiential learning. While Kolb's rational and logical model is temporarily useful as an analytical tool, a discussion of a post-modernist nature, as in this study, should perhaps dig a little deeper. My learning experiences and the body of literature suggest that perhaps the process of experiential learning is more intricate and, quite frankly, messier than Kolb proposes (Itin, 1999; Roberts, 2008). There are numerous questions to ask of

this model, such as "what about the phase of preparation or front-loading that often occurs before an experience" or "How are embodied experiences abstractly conceptualized when there are no words describe the 'felt' experience"? In light of this, I used Kolb's model as a starting place from which to analyze and introduce the data. I have then added a deeper level of discussion by incorporating other ideas that serve to trouble and, in essence, dislocate the notion of experiential learning as a simple step-by-step process.

The philosophy of Experiential Education.

If experiential learning refers to the method, then experiential education embodies the philosophy (Breunig, 2009; Itin, 1999). A philosophy of education refers to the purpose, process, nature and ideals of a particular way of educating (Noddings, 1995). As a point of clarification, EXED will, from this point on, refer to a philosophy of education within which, EL serves as the methodology. For the purposes of this study, the definition of EXED put forth by the Association for Experiential Education (AEE) has been taken as the working definition because it provides for a straightforward and holistic understanding. In 1994, the AEE's board of directors approved and adopted an organizational definition, which states that "experiential education is both a philosophy and a methodology in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills and clarify values" (AEE, 2009). In addition, AEE also outlines a list of principles of EXED practice (see Appendix B).

In the following writing I will offer a number of ideas related to understanding EXED including EXED's epistemology, pedagogy and its variable meanings. The point

here is to offer more than just a definition of EXED. According to Chapman, McPhee and Proudman (1992) there is risk involved in attempting to define EXED. In doing so, the definition may simply be taken down and remembered for future regurgitation of its concept. To remember and repeat information, as will be explicated later, is fundamentally contradictory to the philosophy of EXED. And so, as Chapman et al. describe, the value lies in asking the question of "what is EXED" because it is only through this questioning and exploring process that one can come to understand its multiple meanings.

The epistemological stance of Experiential Education.

Exploring how EXED is situated within the realm of learning theories can enrich an understanding of EXED. Epistemology is the study of "how and what we know" (Crosby, 1981, p. 9). The epistemological stance of EXED theory must first be understood before the theory can be situated within a broader context. Crosby explains in great detail the connection between the work of Emmanuel Kant and EXED. In the late 1700's, Kant put forth his ideas of how humans generate knowledge and how humans order the world, or, in other words, how we learn (Crosby). Essentially, it was suggested that the source of order was not the external world, but rather, the human mind. Thus, it is through experiencing the world and in ordering perceptions that humans are able to generate knowledge (Crosby).

John Dewey drew upon the works of Kant (Crosby, 1981). Central to Dewey's theorizing was the idea that the human mind is an ordering body and that reality is created as it is individually experienced. Dewey was critical of rational epistemologies of education that place too heavy of an emphasis on intellect and cognition and not enough

on experiencing the surrounding environment (Crosby). In addition, he postulated that education should be concerned with knowing values (Crosby). It was not good enough to think and talk about values. According to Dewey, the most effective way in which to know values is through trial and error, through prosperity and adversity, or, essentially, through experience (Crosby). In this sense, Dewey was a proponent of the scientific method and its underlying belief in empirical observation as a primary method for perceiving and knowing the world (Dewey, 1938). Thus, "the metaphysical starting point should not be an abstraction, but experience itself: philosophy should investigate life as humans experience it, not as it might be" (Crosby, 1981, p. 13).

Dewey refrained from ever offering a clear definition of the word "experience". He suggested that, as it relates to EXED, "experience" could be much more than its most basic understanding as mere observation or interaction (Dewey, 1938). Rather, "experience" also involves a course of understanding the significance of our interactions. In this way, an "experience" becomes a multi-staged process. Of course, not all experiences are reflective of this process (Dewey). More will be said about this in the following.

Dewey went on to examine how humans learn from experience (Crosby, 1981). He suggested that perhaps learning happens when experiences are accompanied by reflection. This reflection should draw upon both theory and the learner's previous experiences. In essence, one of the goals of education, for Dewey, is to "understand and use our experience, and this is achieved by developing the thought processes with which we examine our experience" (Crosby, 1981, p. 14). In more practical terms, the goal is to move from difficulty to resolution in one's life. Through this reflective process, learners

construct knowledge about their world for present or future application (Dewey, 1938). Jickling (2009) also reminds us that EXED opens the door to learning through avenues other than the reflective intellect. Experiences can also spawn understanding for learners when the experience is embodied, or rather, felt and emotionally understood. Thus, cognitive reflection is but one method for learners to move from experiencing to understanding (Jickling, 2009).

More recently, Allison and Pomeroy (2000) discussed the epistemological and ontological foundations of EXED. According to Allison and Pomeroy, EXED provides an alternative to rationalist and empiricist theories. A rationalist theory posits that knowledge is generated through thinking only and an empiricist theory suggests that knowledge is garnered from sensory experiences without regard for prior knowledge (Allison & Pomeroy). Echoing the thoughts of Dewey, Allison and Pomeroy stress that a learner has the ability to build upon prior knowledge through new experiences. Thus, in contrast to the rationalist approach in mainstream forms of Euro/ Western education, where the educator disseminates knowledge unto the learner, EXED is based upon the idea that the learner and the educator both bring their own prior knowledge and understanding to the learning experience.

In light of understanding the epistemological stance of EXED we begin to look at EXED as a learning theory. A number of authors have situated EXED within the holistic learning theory of constructivism (Carver, 1996; DeLay, 1996; Gordon, 2009; Quay, 2003). Quay argues that holistic theories of learning take into account the entire phenomenon of study and ask that the learner becomes a full participant in the world. In essence, constructivism as a theory of learning states that in interacting with the world,

the learner constructs knowledge by making connections between their present and past experiences (Carver, 1996; DeLay, 1996; Gordon, 2009; Quay, 2003). Quay (2003) adds that Piaget is recognized within the historical roots of constructivism. Piaget contended that learning is a process of accommodation and adaptation that happens when new experiences produce learning that conflicts with that of previous experience (Quay, 2003). Kolb's experiential learning cycle provides an example of constructivist learning theory in action in that a learner constructs knowledge by reflecting, generalizing and abstracting in the learning process (DeLay, 1996).

In situating experiential education, DeLay (1996) makes a comparison to Mainstream Education (ME). Mainstream education refers to the philosophy of education that dominates our institutions of public education and that is most closely linked with a behaviorist learning theory. Behaviorism suggests that by applying specific external stimuli to a learner a planned response will result (Skinner, 1976). Thus, the learner obtains knowledge externally and applies it to his world so as to negotiate consequences of action (DeLay). For DeLay, the issue with behaviorism is that the educator, rather than the learner, acts as the agent of change.

From a constructivist worldview, knowledge is created internally and requires the learner to be the agent of change. Because it is internally constructed and is related to past experience, knowledge is individually relevant (DeLay). In this sense, each learner has the option to create his own meaning from experience. Dewey (1938) felt that there is importance in recognizing continuity in learning experiences for the individual. In essence, learning should continuously build upon previous experience so that new and useful knowledge can be generated (Dewey, 1938). This suggests that the educator and

learner must be aware of past experiences so that the learning can be intentionally guided. This intentional guidance that is so characteristic of EXED can be understood by reviewing EXED pedagogy.

Pedagogy of Experiential Education.

The pedagogical underpinnings of EXED are one of the most notable aspects of this philosophy. In others words, the role of the educator is unique (Chapman et al., 1992). The educator's role is to aid learners in developing their own paths (Crosby, 1981). The educator is ideally suited to the task because of a concept that Dewey (1938) refers to as "the greater maturity of experience" (p. 38). This concept suggests that the adult educator has had in his life more experiences than the less mature learner and is, thus, in a better position to serve as a guide in the educating process (Dewey).

Rebecca Carver (1996) highlights four features of experiential education pedagogy. An experiential educator aims to provide authentic learning experiences. These experiences should be meaningful in the context of the learner's life and should have natural consequences. In addition, learning should be an active experience that engages the learner physically, mentally and emotionally. Active mental engagement, as distinct from passive mental engagement, is of paramount importance. Active mental engagement refers to the internalization of the thought process so that tasks involving problem solving and understanding can be undertaken. In contrast, Carver argues that passive engagement refers to the tasks of accepting and remembering what is experienced for the purpose of, in the future, repeating what was heard or observed (Carver). However, passive mental engagement can, at times, be accompanied by active emotional engagement (Jickling, 2009). Value can also be placed on the notion that learners or,

rather, "experiencers" may come to understand, construct or deconstruct values and beliefs through emotional or "felt" engagement (Jickling)

Drawing upon learner experience is the third feature that Carver (1996) mentions. With this in mind, the experiential educator recognizes and gives credit to a learner's past experiences and to the experiences had in the educational program. In this sense, the educator may at times play the role of detective at various stages of the learning program so that he can gain an understanding of the learners' past experiences. As such, activity and reflection can be framed for learners in relation to their previous experiences. Finally, EXED pedagogy espouses methods for connecting experiences to future experiences. Of note is the emphasis on engaging learners in a physical and mental dialogue of their membership in a community. These pedagogical characteristics allow for a learning environment to develop in which learners become the educators as individuals recognize the expertise of experience in those around them (Carver). Thus, one of the roles of the educator is to offer learners opportunities for community engagement.

Chapman et al. (1992) discuss the role of the educator in the EXED process as well and give a few suggestions. The provision of a minimum necessary structure for learners is highlighted first. This concept, borrowed from Dewey's (1938) work suggests a balance must be struck when bounding an intended learning experience and when assisting students in their learning process. An experience lacks the ability to be meaningful when the learning environment is so rigid that the learner is not able to tailor his experience to his needs (Crosby, 1981). In contrast, if the learning environment does not contain enough structure, the learner has the potential to go on experiencing the world

aimlessly, or without intention. Thus, a minimum necessary structure may be required in order to provide balance and, ultimately, an educative experience (Dewey).

Another essential role of the educator is to aid learners in making connections (Chapman et al., 1992). Again, Dewey (1938) reminds us that experiences are not educative on their own. The educator is charged with the task of intentionally and purposefully guiding the reflective, formative and abstractive processes. Breunig (2009) suggests that many experiential education programs ascribe to experiential learning as a methodology, but they fall short in that an intended aim or outcome is lacking. When experiential education programs are guided by intended outcomes they become, "an intentional, purposeful approach to teaching and learning" (Breunig, 2009, p. 3). An educator's focus on being purposeful and intentional characterizes perhaps the most important aspect of EXED pedagogy (Breunig, 2009).

Within this line of thinking, I'd also like to remind the reader that EXED need not always be thought of as such a bounded procedure (Eisner, 1985; Jickling, 2009). Again, as I suggested in my criticism of Kolb's model, some EXED theorists encourage us to think of experiential philosophy as spontaneous and unscripted at times in addition to it being guided by principals and values (Jickling). Eisner suggests that educators not always focus their intentions and purposes upon specific learning objectives but, rather, upon engaging "in activities that are sufficiently rich to allow for a wide, productive range of educationally valuable outcomes" (p. 121). In essence, learners are given the power to migrate toward personalized outcomes that are individually expressed (Eisner).

So, in light of all of the above and in light of the ideal of experiential education as philosophy, as articulated at the outset of this section, what might be the challenges to actually conceptualizing a philosophy of experiential education?

Variations of the meaning of Experiential Education.

This section will serve to highlight the body of literature that challenges "common" notions of EXED. The few studies related to this subject, highlight the need for more discussion and debate as to the assumptions, parameters and intentions of EXED (Itin, 1999; Roberts, 2008). Dewey (1938) began the discussion on this topic a number of years ago by suggesting that one of the purposes of reflection is to be considerate of the cultural influences present in the learner's observations of his experience. These cultural indicators, in the form of past prejudices or circumstances, serve to inform critical reflection in the present. This critical reflection is then carried forward to inform and enrich future participation in the world (Dewey).

Itin (1999) puts forth what he considers to be a uniquely robust and holistic understanding of EXED that encourages critical thought processes. According to Itin, many definitions of EXED do not distinguish between methodology and philosophy and they fail to take setting and subject into account. It is proposed that in offering a more robust definition of EXED, the conversation amongst the greater community of practitioners and theorist can be enhanced. This banding together of the community in dialogue could support the educational reform that Itin calls for. It is through educational reform that Itin sees EXED as a vehicle for social change.

Itin (1999) posits that a more holistic philosophy of EXED, "must consider the larger system level issues of education such as the socio-political-economic elements in the learning environment" (p. 92). Itin provides a more robust definition in claiming:

> Experiential education is a holistic philosophy, where carefully chosen experiences supported by reflection, critical analysis, and synthesis, are structured to require the learner to take initiative, make decisions, and be accountable for the results, through actively posing questions, investigating, experimenting, being curious, solving problems, assuming responsibility, being creative, constructing meaning, and integrating previously developed knowledge. Learners are engaged intellectually, emotionally, socially, politically, spiritually, and physically in an uncertain environment where the learner may experience success, failure, adventure and risk taking. The learning usually involves interaction between learners, learner and educator, and learner and environment. It challenges the learner to explore issues of values, relationship, diversity, inclusion, and community. The educator's primary roles include selecting suitable experiences, posing problems, setting boundaries, supporting learners, insuring physical and emotional safety, facilitating the learning process, guiding reflection, and providing the necessary information. The results of the learning form the basis of future experience and learning (p. 93).

Itin (1999) suggests that his definition of experiential education can be depicted using the Diamond Model (see Figure 2).

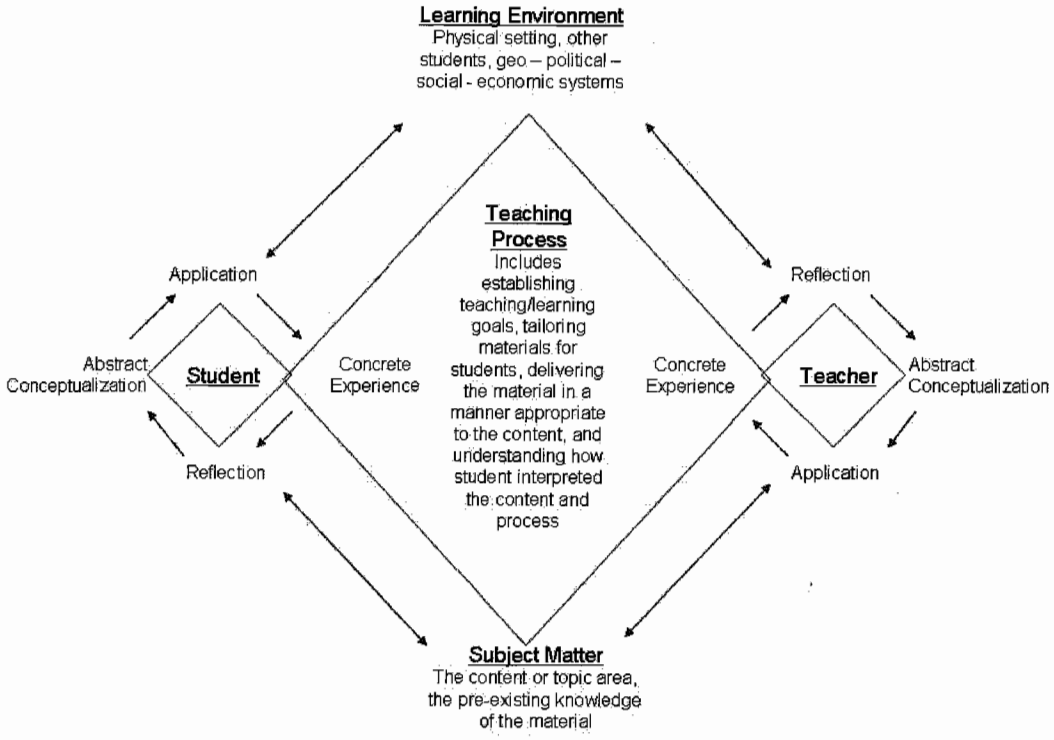

Figure 2. The diamond model of the philosophy of Experiential Education (Itin, 1999).

As in Itin's definition, the Diamond Model suggests that both the educator and learner are involved in a transactive process that recognizes and calls upon the experience and knowledge of each person. Second, this model shows that both the educator and learner have an affect on the learning environment and vice versa, thus, suggesting that EXED has the potential for social change. Finally, Itin explains that the Diamond Model does not confine EXED to a narrow view of the educator's chosen teaching process. In this way, the model is available for use in the greater community of EXED professionals. This model represents the evolution of theory and practice over the years that have shaped EXED as a philosophy. Perhaps the most valuable component of Itin's conceptualization of EXED lies in the fact that both EL as methodology and EXED as philosophy have been included as distinct and equally necessary concepts. Ultimately,

Itin advocates for the field of EXED to move toward the development of a common understanding and an all-encompassing definition of EXED. More recently, however, this notion has been contested (Roberts, 2008).

Roberts (2008) argues that "current scholarship seems to utilize a 'common sense' notion of experience that ignores important distinctions, contradictions, and conflict embedded in the term" (p. 21). In building upon the ideas of Itin (1999), Roberts (2008) suggests that rather than seeking to define or to develop a common understanding of the field of "experiential theory" it should be celebrated for its variable threads and themes (p. 20). In other words, the field of experiential theory should continue to explore its multiple and sometimes contradictory meanings so as to try to make sense of how the variances are linked and why the "whole" can have such a profound effect (Roberts). Roberts analyzed the multitude of different theoretical positions related to experiential theory, from past and present, and, simply for presenting the ideas in a coherent manner, offers his conception of four broad variances within experiential theory (p. 21).

The first three variances include: (a) interactive experience, linked to pragmatist philosophy; (b) embodied experience, linked to Romanticism and phenomenology; and (c) experience as praxis, linked to critical theory (Roberts, 2008). Roberts then suggests that the three variances have been traditionally marginalized within ME by a fourth variation. This fourth sect, called neo-experientialism, is linked to efficiency, individual performance and consumerism. In essence, experiences of this type fit neatly into current standardization efforts in education. Roberts characterizes these learning experiences as "tightly bounded (in both space and time), rationally constructed, and efficiently controlled. 'Normal' classroom or school activity stops and experiential activity then

begins for a bounded and specific timeframe" (p. 29). In essence, superficial, consumptive and uncritical experiences are offered in neatly structured packages that often deny learners the opportunity for creation, participation and in-depth reflection (Roberts). The proliferation of half-day high or low ropes course "experiences" for school students, in the neo-experiential style, is an example of this growing trend toward simply "consuming" experiences. Thus, Roberts suggests:

> The neo-experiential variation becomes part of a larger problem than a potentially powerful and transformational curriculum, response. Prepackaged and sweet (like candy), efficiently and predictably managed (like McDonald's), and slickly produced (like Disney), it can give us only the illusion of freedom (p. 31).

Roberts' (2008) call to action then entails not a coming together to form all-encompassing understanding as Itin (1999) suggested but, rather, a coming together of the community of educators and scholars who rely on the varied forms of experience in education to debate the assumptions and intentions of the multiple variations. This engagement in debate has the potential for new alliances to be formed between the many groups of educators who use "experience" in education in different ways. In addition, "it can create the opportunity to discuss more forcefully the role experiential education has within the current school reform zeitgeist and the role it could and should play in the future" (Roberts, p. 33). Thus, Roberts makes a request for more research that focuses on the aforementioned ongoing debate amongst educators.

Summary remarks.

Experiential education has been defined in a number of ways in the literature and often is defined in multiple ways (Itin, 1999; Roberts, 2008). As Itin (1999) and others

have suggested, EL represents the methodological component of the philosophy of EXED. These terms, EL and EXED, are often misrepresented in the literature and as a result, there may be confusion in the profession as to what the research is actually saying. As evidenced, it seems that more research is needed in which EXED is understood and utilized as a philosophy and a methodology. In addition, more research is needed that relates to the variations in EXED meanings and philosophies and how these variations effect the ways in which EXED plays a role in school reform, as expressed by Roberts. Every year, a growing troop of innovative and progressive educators in K-12 schools attempt to mesh EXED with ME with varying degrees of success. This next section will illuminate a number of examples of how EXED has been used in schools.

Experiential Education in K-12 Schools

Experiential education in K-12 schools takes on different forms, including: outdoor education, environmental education, service learning, integrated curriculum programs and place-based education among others (Adkins & Simmons, 2002; Richardson & Simmons, 1996). Outdoor education (OE) is defined as, "education about the outdoors and its many ramifications, in the outdoors, for the purpose of developing knowledge, skills and attitudes concerning the world in which we live" (Ford, 1986, p. 4). In this sense, OE is a form of EXED that takes place out-of-doors. In a similar fashion, environmental education (EE) focuses on the development of core concepts and skills to develop environmentally literate citizens who engage in environmentally responsible action (North American Association for Environmental Education, 1999). Outdoor education and EE will be referred to in the coming sections as some of the examples of EXED in K-12 schools are based on these specific types of EXED.

According to Kolb and Boyatzis (2001), the bulk of the literature on EXED focuses on the place of EXED in higher education environments. Relatively little research has been done on EXED in the K-12 education environment (Kolb & Boyatzis). With this in mind, the purpose of this section is to explore the relationship between EXED and ME in K-12 schools. The previous section explored EXED in depth. In this section, ME will be explained and critiqued in greater detail and will be compared to EXED philosophy. In doing so, the discussion can then move to an exploration of how EXED and ME have been used together as educating philosophies by underlining examples in the literature. This next section begins with some historical examples of EXED in K-12 schools, starting with the first recorded evidence of these. Next I examine the benefits and limitations of EXED. Finally, I highlight the successes and challenges faced by the education community in integrating EXED into K-12 schools.

History of Experiential Education in K-12 schools.

According to experiential educators, Ed Raiola and Marty O'Keefe (1999), EXED in K-12 schools can be traced back to those programs that introduced elements of adventure education into the formal schooling system. Adventure education, as described by Raiola and O'Keefe (1999), involves the personal growth of a learner through challenging outdoor experiences. It is important to note that adventure education is a form of experiential education (Lund, 1997). Through the mid 1800s, some educators believed in the power of group-focused outdoor learning (Raiola & O'Keefe). The camping movement was one manifestation of the efforts of some of these progressive educators. During the camping movement, which started as early as 1861, students were learning through expeditions, camping and challenge activities (Raiola & O'Keefe).

In the late 1800s, the Gunnery School in Connecticut developed one of the first school programs that used camping as one of its learning environments (Raiola & O'Keefe, 1999). The students and teachers went on a 40 mile hike at the end of the school year to "live simply" and to partake in developing practical outdoor skills (Raiola & O'Keefe, p. 47). Laura Mattoon focused her efforts on the personal growth of young women. In the summer of 1902, she led a group of young women, enrolled in a private school, through the New Hampshire wilderness. Laura's intention in leading this program was for the young women to have a chance to challenge traditional gender boundaries and to learn wilderness camp craft skills (Raiola & O'Keefe).

Kurt Hahn founded the Outward Bound Schools in 1941 (Raiola & O'Keefe, 1999). The Outward Bound programs remained mostly in the private and non-formal sectors of education until 1992 when the Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound (ELOB) model was introduced to K-12 schools (Weinbaum, Gregory, Wilkie, Hirsch & Fancsali, 1996). The model was central to the following guiding principles: (a) the primacy of self-discovery, (b) the having of wonderful ideas, (c) the responsibility for learning, (d) intimacy and caring, (e) success and failure, (f) collaboration and competition, (g) diversity and inclusivity, (h) care for the natural world, (i) solitude and reflection, and (j) service and compassion (Weinbaum et al.). A handful of high schools offer experience-based courses taught with these design principles in mind (Weinbaum et al.). An example of ELOB in K-12 schools will be provided shortly.

These notable examples of EXED in K-12 schools represent a brief history of the topic. The next section will further explore contemporary uses of EXED in K-12 schools.

Comparing Experiential Education and Mainstream Education.

A handful of authors have explored the relationship between EXED and ME and have made the call for further research (Crew, 1987; Ewert, 1987; Lindsay & Ewert, 1999; Mink & O'Steen, 2003; Ives & Obenchain, 2006; Breunig, 2009). The purpose of examining this relationship is not to suggest that EXED should replace ME, but, rather, is to simply highlight the differences between EXED and ME. It is important to highlight the distinctions between the two educational philosophies so as to begin to explore some of the reasons why certain challenges and supports exist when implementing EXED in schools. Before the discussion can go on then, ME will first be explained and critiqued.

Professors of experiential education Anne Lindsay and Alan Ewert (1999) contend that, "the original intent of the American and Canadian public school systems was that all citizens should receive a basic education in order to become better individuals and better members of society" (p. 13). Lindsay and Ewert also clarify that the original intent must be framed within the politico-economic situation of the early 1900s. Essentially, learners were being delivered a curriculum that taught the skills necessary to produce and consume goods so that the new industrial-capitalist society could flourish. Specifically, the curriculum content that supported this intention was literacy and numeracy (Lindsay & Ewert).

The current state of ME bears a resemblance to its original form. According to Lindsay and Ewert (1999), the most obvious reflection lies in the shared common values of schools across America and Canada respectively. Standardized testing represents one of the methods used in ME to ensure nation-wide consistency. For example, one would not have to search too far in either system for present day examples of this (e.g. George

Bush's "No Child Left Behind") (Ives & Obenchain, 2006). Crew (1987) describes that standardized testing has shaped the way in which educators deliver curriculum content. This form of learner assessment evolved out of the standards-based reform movement that began in the early 1990s and acts as a solitary measure of a learner's mastery of specific content areas (Ives & Obenchain, 2006). In ME, educators often develop the educational content and the delivery of the content as a way of teaching to the standardized test. In other words, memorization represents the primary construct of learning (Crew).

Recently, the work of Ives and Obenchain (2006) offers a few critiques of the standardized testing model used by ME. It is suggested that standardized tests only assess lower-order knowledge and skills such as recall and comprehension and are neglectful of high-order functions such as analysis, thinking and evaluation. Because some teachers may feel that the only measurable marker of their work lays in the results of these tests they, thus, alter their teaching styles to fit the model of testing for lower-order thinking (Ives & Obenchain).

These alterations happen in two ways. First, models based on problem solving, inquiry and critical thinking are often abandoned because they simply take too much time. More efficient learning strategies, such as lecture and instruction, are employed so as to cover and repeat as much of the necessary content as possible. Second, Ives and Obenchain (2006) describe that teachers will narrow their curriculum content to only offer what is necessary for the test. Because the tests often cover basic information, specifics required for in-depth understanding may not be offered to students in class. Standarized testing represents ME's model in fruition, as one of its main characteristics is

to develop unity and consistency of teaching methods and curriculum content in schools (Ives & Obenchain).

Lindsay and Ewert (1999) compared EXED and ME models using seven elements common to most models of education, including: (a) educational goals, (b) epistemologies, (c) organization of learners, (d) communication, (e) organization of learning process, (f) available teaching resources, and (g) evaluative strategies. Table 1 highlights the comparison (Lindsay & Ewert, p. 17). Few similarities were found between the two models of EXED and ME. Of note, EXED and ME share a similar educational goal in that both promote the education of learners for participation in a democratic society (Dewey, 1938; Lindsay & Ewert). The differences are numerous. In essence, EXED places the learner as the focal point around which content is planned and learning is assessed. In contrast, ME in K-12 schools places standardized and pre-determined content as it focal point around which the student must shape himself and must be able to recall during testing.

Table 1

Comparison of Mainstream Education and Experiential Education on Seven Parameters

Parameter	Experiential Education	Mainstream Education
Goals	Legitimacy of personal and individual growth: Individual development contributes to the larger community and society	Conformity to shared common values, deterministic: To teach students about societal activity rather than ways of living this activity
Concepts of Knowledge	Knowledge does not represent a single view of reality; Holistic with the deliberate inclusion of all domains (physical, emotional, cognitive, etc.) into learning	Separation of the physical, social, aesthetic, and effective components form the intellectual part of learning
Grouping of Students	Usually small group environments using shared group experiences as a teaching foundation; Learning outcomes are often student-directed rather than teacher-directed	Usually large single groups; Student functioning is often independent of other students; Students usually only responsible to the teacher and their own work
Organization of Communication	Self-organized and task-dependent; Teacher acts as both facilitator and instructor; Intra-group communication deemed critical to success	IRE Pattern (initiate, respond, evaluate): Directed to and from the teacher by the teacher
Organization of Topic	Constructivist approach; Transfer of knowledge to other areas in student's life	Transmissional model of teaching; Often little transfer of knowledge to areas outside the specific subject
Resources	Uses settings outside of classroom; Direct experiences are an important component of the learning experience	The experiences and thoughts of others; Highly restricted by needs of curriculum
Evaluation Strategies	Often self-appraisal; Focused on task accomplishment	By reference to criteria external to the student's own control or authority

Lindsay and Ewert (1999) have pointed to a number of fundamental differences between EXED and ME. Because of the differences, the potential relationship between EXED and ME can either be seen as conflicting or, as in my view, complementary, depending upon how these differences are perceived. Thus, I turned to the literature for insight into this conundrum. The next two sections will focus on the learner, regarding the benefits and limitations of meshing EXED with ME in K-12 schools. The following

two sections will highlight the successes and challenges the education community has faced in offering EXED programming in K-12 schools.

Benefits for learners.

Research on EXED in K-12 schools suggests that EXED can enhance learners' social development (Blair, 2009; Byerly, 2001; Conrad & Hedin, 1981), can enhance intellectual development (Byerly, 2001; Conrad & Hedin, 1981), can increase curricular achievement (Blair, 2009), can contribute to behavioral improvement (Blair, 2009), and can enhance appreciation for the natural environment (Dillon et al., 2006). These studies will be further explored in this next section.

In 1981, Conrad and Hedin conducted the "National Assessment of Experiential Education" (p. 6). This study was one of the first to make a case for EXED in ME based schools by examining 30 school-based experiential education programs using control groups to compare to experimental groups. The researchers found that the experimental groups, whose learning was based on the EXED model, benefited more positively than did the control groups whose learning was situated in the ME model. The experimental groups were more positively impacted than the control groups in the realms of social and intellectual development. EXED was shown to have positive impacts on a learner's social development in terms of developing a positive attitude towards adults and other peers, an attitude toward being active in the community and an ability to plan for and transition into future endeavors (Conrad & Hedin).

Byerly (2001) makes a number of suggestions as to why learners benefit from EXED programs. He bases this information on his own observations as an educator. He offers his students the opportunity to experientially re-create historical events. In

working on these projects, the learner experiences social development benefits from EXED programs in and out of the classroom because collaboration takes place in the learning process. In other words, learners are often required to work in small groups and need to learn to work in a cooperative manner.

In addition, Byerly (2001) suggests that EXED can enhance intellectual development. Learners have the opportunity to develop critical thinking skills when placed in novel situations (Byerly). Byerly highlights how he uses historical simulations with his learners in an effort to create integrated and experiential learning opportunities. In thinking across the boundaries of subjects, learners are able to draw their own connections and are able to formulate critical questions of the subjects. Conrad and Hedin's (1981) study shows that when students were asked about how much they thought they had learned, the primary response was that more was learned in the EXED program versus the ME program. These same students also scored higher on problem solving tests as a result of being involved in an EXED program of learning.

School gardening, as a form of OE, has become a national movement in America over the last 20 years (Blair, 2009). Blair studied how the learner benefits through school gardening. According to Blair (2009), the original, and still current, purpose of school gardens was "pragmatic and normative: to teach through experience, to connect children to pastoral nature and to shape their moral outlook" (p. 17). In this sense, experiential learning happens in school gardening through direct contact with the natural world and through inquiry-based concrete experiences (Blair). Blair reviewed a number of past studies in an effort to draw general conclusions. Her findings indicate that a number of benefits of school gardening have been recognized. The majority of the reviewed studies

indicated increased science achievement and behavioral improvement when gardening was used to contextualize theory. Essentially, Blair suggests, children are able to see theoretical processes at work and can make connections to classroom content, thus, enhancing science-based learning and curricular achievement.

In a study by Dillon et al. (2006), the body of knowledge on OE in Britain was reviewed to highlight the value of OE in K-12 schools. Identified benefits for the learner included higher scores in academic assessments, more effective development of cognitive skills and increased appreciation for the natural environment.

Limitations for learners.

Millenbah and Millspaugh (2003) suggest that EXED offers certain limitations to learners. These authors draw upon their own experiences of facilitating outdoor science courses. From a curriculum-based perspective, EXED programs require more time to cover content as compared to ME programs because of the fact that EXED programs ask the learner to discover the theory through experience rather than asking the learner to comprehend the theory by reading or listening as is the case with the ME model (Millenbah & Millspaugh). The EXED approach, quite simply, often results in less coverage of curriculum content. This is an issue for learners who still need to take part in the standardized testing of ME. Learners in EXED programs may fall behind their counterparts simply because they have not covered as much material in their experiential learning based classrooms. In addition, Millenbah and Millspaugh have found that certain students experience anxiety when the shift is made to EXED methods of learning. Learners can feel confused or anxious when experiencing new methods of learning and assessment for the first time.

Implementation successes.

Research shows that the communities of education providers including teachers and principals have certain strategies for being successful in offering EXED in K-12 schools. These strategies include: (a) accessing more time for planning and for collaboration with colleagues (Weinbaum et al., 1996), (b) appropriate teacher training (Conrad & Hedin, 1981; Weinbaum et al., 1996), (c) gaining support from the school board/ ministerial level (Byerly, 2001, Millenbah & Millspaugh, 2003), and (d) involving learners in the creation of curriculum (Millenbah & Millspaugh, 2003). The majority of participants in these studies were teachers. Thus, there exists a gap in the literature as to perceptions of principals on how EXED can be successfully implemented into K-12 schools.

Weinbaum et al. (1996) conducted a study of the Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound Project (ELOB). The ELOB Project, involving the participation of 10 schools over a two-year term, represented an experiment in educational reform. The authors evaluated how the ELOB Project was implemented in schools, how schools changed as a result of implementation, and the impact the program had on the students. Participating schools adopted, to varying degrees, an experiential model of learning in which learners participated in learning expeditions that were focused by guiding questions (Weinbaum et al.). These learning expeditions involved time spent in the classroom, in the community and in the natural environment. The researchers identified three types of schools based on their level of adoption of the ELOB Project. Transformed schools became ELOB schools totally, phased-in schools adopted ELOB in some classes

over the two-year term, and the new schools were created specifically for the ELOB Project (Weinbaum et al.).

Teachers worked at creating the curriculum content of the ELOB Project. The teachers were responsible for meeting city and state education requirements and for creating content that was relevant and important to learners. In this study, teachers expressed a need for extra planning time and for planning time with colleagues as tools for success (Weinbaum et al., 1996). Colleagues were described as other teachers, principals and committee members. Because teachers were creating new curriculum content and delivery methods, more time was needed to plan. The provision of this extra planning time was a key to success.

Conrad and Hedin (1981) reported on how program characteristics affected the quality of each individual EXED program they studied. Of note and of relevance to this study, the researchers found that teacher training and education greatly affected the quality and availability of the EE programs. Having more teachers trained in EXED philosophy meant that there were more and there were better quality EXED programs in K-12 schools. The call was made for more research regarding changes in teacher training that would support the inclusion of the EXED model in K-12 schools (Conrad & Hedin). In addition, most teachers were successful in the ELOB Project as a result of the teacher training that was involved (Weinbaum et al., 1996).

According to Byerly (2001), educators are successful in offering EXED in K-12 schools when there is support from the school board. The process should begin and be supported by a committee of people who are familiar with school and district policies (Byerly). Byerly suggests that the local school board must also be supportive of EXED

initiatives as must be the school board's insurance provider. The school board and the school should also be willing to provide some or all of the funding that may be necessary for projects. Should the funding not be available, the educator and students are then responsible for fundraising or seeking out grants to initiate the projects. In being attentive to such factors, Byerly has been successful in incorporating the EXED model into his classes.

Millenbah and Millspaugh (2003) also suggest that they have been successful in offering EXED to learners when administrative support is available. For example, this may come in the form of support for a fieldtrip provided by a board of education logistical or risk management specialist or of the provision of necessary equipment (Millenbah & Millspaugh). In this sense, commitment from the administrative level is necessary for EXED programs to flourish in the K-12 school setting.

Finally, Millenbah and Millspaugh (2003) explain that while some learners do feel anxious about EXED, they have had success with this issue of anxiety by involving learners in an open dialogue around planning for the learning experiences and of expectations of both the educator and learner (Millenbah & Millspaugh). Students are reminded that being challenged through the learning process is acceptable and natural under the EXED model. As well, successful programs make an effort to conclude experiences whether success was had or not. This offers students a form of closure on the experience. Attentiveness to the needs of learners, in this sense, can contribute to the successful implementation of EXED programs in K-12 schools (Byerly, 2001; Millenbah & Millspaugh)

Implementation challenges/ barriers.

Blair (2009) took note of the challenges of offering school gardening as a form of OE in K-12 schools. She looked at this from the perspective of the teachers and the principals. In discovering very little research regarding the role of the principal, Blair called for more research to be done regarding the effect of the principal in the process of offering school gardening. Blair cites lack of personal interest as a major limitation for teachers in offering school gardening. A number of factors contribute to the level of a teacher's interest for experiential education initiatives, such as school gardening, including: enthusiasm of principals; student excitement about school gardening through promotion by other teachers; and availability of semi-retired teachers whom could aid in the process (Blair). Blair also cites limited capabilities, knowledge and time as other challenges for teachers regarding the offering of school gardening.

The conclusions of Dillon et al. (2006) support Blair's assertions that there exists a certain set of challenges to offering OE within the ME model. These challenges are resonant with challenges previously identified in other related studies (Blair, 2009; Lindsay & Ewert, 1999). The five challenges identified by Dillon et al. include: "(a) fear and concern about health and safety; (b) teachers' lack of confidence in teaching outdoors; (c) school curriculum requirements; (d) shortages of time, resources and support; and (d) wider changes within and beyond the education sector" (p. 108).

Crew (1987) suggested that the best learning situation is created when the proper blend of, "actual and vicarious experiences, of theory and practice" exists (p. 147). He eluded to the notion that EXED and ME could not only co-exist in the K-12 schooling environment, but also could support and complement each other in offering learners a

more holistic learning experience. In light of the literature reviewed thus far, it is clear that the majority of research regarding the potential of EXED's place in the broader K-12 ME model suggests, in agreement with Crew, that EXED is best implemented as a support or supplement to the ME model. However, few studies exist in regards to the utilization of EXED as the primary philosophy for teaching and learning. In addition, the relevant body of knowledge identifies numerous challenges that teachers have faced in attempting to utilize EXED in the ME classroom. A number of studies have also indicated ways in which educators have been successful in overcoming the challenges of implementation. This next section will thus explore the specific K-12 educational environment of the Yukon and more importantly, EXED in Yukon K-12 schools.

Experiential Education in Yukon K-12 Schools

The K-12 public education environment in the Yukon Territory of Canada is uniquely reflective of a territory that holds relatively few residents in an expansive landmass that is 482443 square kilometers in size (Government of Yukon, 2009). As of December 2009, Yukon's population was 34,157. Approximately three-quarters of Yukon residents live in Whitehorse, the territory's capital. The Public Schools Branch of the Yukon Department of Education provides an education system for approximately 4964 K-12 students in 28 schools (Government of Yukon, 2009). This section will first discuss the nature of the education system in the Yukon Territory and will describe how curriculum is developed. I will then highlight the literature related to experiential education integration in Yukon K-12 schools.

The city of Whitehorse is host to 14 public schools including, eight elementary schools, two Catholic elementary schools, two secondary schools, one Catholic

secondary school and one K-12 French First Language School (Government of Yukon, 2007). Of the 14 rural schools that exist outside of the Whitehorse area, most offer programs for students from kindergarten to grade nine. A few of the larger rural communities offer schooling up to grade 12. Those students from communities where some secondary grades may not be offered are able to attend school in Whitehorse or in another community of their choice. These students are boarded as guest students in the host city (Government of Yukon, 2007).

A quarter of the total student population is of First Nations ancestry (Government of Yukon, 2007). The primary language of instruction in Yukon schools is English and a minority of students is instructed in French at the French Immersion program and the French First Language School. French and Aboriginal languages are offered as second language courses. The Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP) prescribes Yukon curriculum (Government of Yukon). This standardized curriculum content is then adapted to suit the local context (Government of Yukon).

Western and Northern Canadian Protocol.

In December 1993, the Yukon Territory's ministers responsible for education signed on to the Western and Northern Canadian Protocol (WNCP) for Collaboration in Basic Education, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (see Appendix C) (WNCP, 2007). Ministers from British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nunavut and Northwest Territories signed on in partnership with the Yukon Territory. A committee of the respective provincial and territorial education ministers governs the WNCP. Working groups made up of a combination of education experts from the various provinces and territories develop curriculum.

The premise of the WNCP is that, "Canadians have common expectations of education where a collaborative approach is both appropriate and desirable" (WNCP-Agreement, 2007, ¶ 1). It is the central objective of the WNCP, "to provide quality education for all students from kindergarten to grade 12" (WNCP- Agreement, 2007, ¶ 1). In essence, the WNCP develops general curricular frameworks for member provinces and territories. For example, a working group may develop a vision, a framework, the course content, learning outcomes and teaching materials for a social studies course for any grade from K-12 (WNCP, 2002). The Yukon Territory then, for example, is able to draw upon the collaborative efforts of six other jurisdictions in utilizing WNCP curriculum frameworks. For the most part, the YDE draws upon the curriculum standards of the British Columbia Board of Education. YDE schools then have the task of contextualizing the curriculum material so that it becomes locally relevant (WNCP-Agreement, 2007).

In consideration of providing an effective standardized curriculum, the ministers: "(1) Share many common educational goals and acknowledge the task of ensuring greater harmonization of ways to achieve them, (2) Want to have high standards in basic education, and (3) Want to have in place an array of educational opportunities in basic education and want to remove obstacles to their accessibility for any individual leaner" (WNCP- Agreement, 2007, ¶ 2). In the WNCP's curriculum material, EL is mentioned twice in reference to educational opportunities (WNCP, 2002; WNCP, 2000). Both references made in the framework guidelines sections of K-12 social studies curriculum describe that students need to have learning opportunities in flexible, adaptive and diverse settings, including the use of EL (WNCP, 2002; WNCP, 2000).

Examples of Experiential Education in Yukon K-12 schools.

The body of research regarding EXED in Yukon K-12 schools is very limited and mostly outdated (Comishin & Potter, 1995; Jickling, 1991; O'Conner, 2008). In addition, two out of the three known studies focus on EXED programming specifically at the Wood Street School.

Comishin and Potter (1995) suggest that part of the YDE's intention is to develop and encourage experiential programs in schools. As an example of a program created at the ministerial level, the Wood Street School is a place that offers alternative and experiential courses for students who wish to apply. Integrated studies programs at the Wood Street School take an experiential approach in using fieldtrips, experiments, community service and hands on learning. These courses are offered to high school students from grade nine to twelve (Government of Yukon, 2006). For instance, the grade 10 ACES program offers a learning experience that focuses on socio-cultural, environmental and leadership topics. Students spend their time both in the classroom and out in the community as well as in the natural environment (Comishin & Potter). There are a limited number of these Wood Street School programs and thus student access to these programs is limited. During the last three years, approximately 150 students per year were accepted into the Wood Street School.

Former Yukon educator, Kevin O'Conner (2008) studied the current educational challenges facing First Nations students in Northern Canada. He took two months to examine the Wood Street School (WSS) experiential programs that are offered by the YDE. The experiential WSS programs were originally developed to accommodate diverse learning styles and to work towards incorporating a more community-focused

process of education (O'Conner). O'Connor determined that experiential processes contribute to knowledge production and Indigenous education in four ways:

> First, the practical application of theoretical knowledge is a valuable contribution to the learning process. Second, an active participation developed by the immersion experience may provide motivation for recognition of environmental and social variation and the need for new strategies for social change. Third, the students develop an understanding of the interrelationship between the ecology of their community and its social framework within a global context. Finally, experiential learning provides the Indigenous student with the task of being conscious about and takes *(sic)* responsibility for the reality of their own political and cultural awareness (p. 21).

In this study, O'Conner suggests that using an EXED model in Yukon schools can successfully engage Indigenous students in a culturally appropriate process of learning.

Finally, professor of educational theory, Bob Jickling (1991) conducted a study in which he made queries into environmental education's place in Yukon K-12 schools. Jickling interviewed teachers in his study and asked questions specifically related to EXED pedagogy. The respondents indicated they had observed various benefits for the learner when EXED programs were offered in the K-12 school setting. The benefits included increased learner motivation, opportunities for various teaching methods to be used and the ability of learners to grasp concepts more readily. In contrast, a couple of limitations were highlighted, including, the inability of students to learn concepts if the theory was not overtly connected to the experience. As well, some teachers expressed

that not all content can be learned experientially when working within the confines of the institution for reasons such as student numbers and costs (Jickling).

Teachers in this study were also queried as to how they felt they could be successful if they were asked to offer environmental education programming in a K-12 school environment (Jickling, 1991). Respondents agreed that initiatives to support teachers would have to be in place. For instance, it was suggested that new curriculum materials, including teacher resources and materials, would have to be developed in such a way that they were reflective of the Yukon context. In addition, assistance in the form of resource personnel, teacher collaboration and professional development was also suggested (Jickling, 1991). This study represents one of the first and one of the few attempts to inquire as to how alternative models of education can be implemented in Yukon K-12 schools.

A number of references to Yukon experiential education are made in YDE reports. In general, "The Department of Education values experiential approaches to curriculum delivery" (Government of Yukon, 2009, Public Schools, ¶ 13). A number of YDE annual reports echo this sentiment by declaring that the YDE:

> Sees the value of integrating experiential approaches into standard course curricula. Many educators use components of experiential education as a matter of course, but the [public schools] branch is actively encouraging the expansion of this approach through ongoing teacher education, and by providing opportunities to enhance curriculum delivery" (Government of Yukon, 2005, p. 23).

The use of EXED as a modus for teaching and learning is not mandated. However, it is contained within YDE documents and their references to recommendations, objectives

and vision statements for the future. As such, the documents create space, or invitations, for further experimentation and development.

The 1998-1999 YDE annual report identified, as part of its list of current objectives, to use experiential education for providing learning opportunities about environmental awareness in its schools (Government of Yukon, 1998). The 1999-2000 annual report recognized the Yukon's success with EXED based programming in the Wood Street school and declared a vision to integrate experiential approaches to learning into the standard course curriculum of all schools (Government of Yukon, 1999). In September of 1999 the YDE developed a curriculum consultant position to:

> Identify barriers to the implementation of experiential programs, working to establish community links regarding experiential education, discussing experiential programming with parents and school councils, and exploring experiential learning options for students at Chief Zzeh Gittlit School in Old Crow (p. 22).

During the 2000-2001 school year, the YDE documented steps they had taken during that year to support and encourage the use of EXED in Yukon schools. The annual report lists four specific projects: (a) "supported training to provide educators with the skills to use experiential techniques and ideas when they deliver curriculum. As a result of this support, it is expected that classroom teachers, from all disciplines, at the intermediate and senior levels, will use experiential approaches more often to help students learn" (Government of Yukon, 2001, p. 10); (b) developed a video on the principles and practices of EXED for teachers in the Yukon; (c) provided opportunities for teachers to work with students out of the classroom on science-based local field

studies; and (d) supported three schools in an international authentic research program called GLOBE and provided relevant in-service training for teachers (Government of Yukon). These programs continued to be supported until 2004 as evidenced in the relevant annual reports (Government of Yukon, 2002; Government of Yukon, 2003; Government of Yukon, 2004).

The YDE reported that throughout the 2004-2007 school years, they continued to provide the existing supports in addition to contributing more funding to certain Wood Street programs, creating an EXED based integrated studies program within Porter Creek Secondary School, integrating more First Nations activities into curriculum and continuing to support traditional on-the-land school activities at schools such as Elijah Smith and Hidden Valley (Government of Yukon, 2004; Government of Yukon, 2005; Government of Yukon, 2006). In the 2007-2008 school year, the recently developed First Nations Programs and Partnerships Unit within the YDE claimed that, "the enhancement of experiential education learning opportunities is a major focus" for the unit (Government of Yukon, 2008, p. 22). The Public Schools Branch also stated, as one of its objectives, that it is "currently reviewing Experiential Programming in Yukon Schools in order to identify successes and support best practice for all Yukon learners" (Government of Yukon, p. 22). The YDE continued with its existent supports as well.

In 2007, the YDE released its *Education Reform Report* that listed an increase in the use of EXED programming as a final recommendation. The same recommendation was expressed in the *One Vision, Multiple Pathways Report* of 2008. The YDE responded to this recommendation in the 2008-2009 annual report by stating that "strategic plans are being developed based on five pillars for improving programming"

(Government of Yukon, 2009, p. 24). As recommended by the *Education Reform Report*, EXED was one of those pillars. In addition to the existing supports, the YDE, in 2008-2009, also offered a canoe instructor certification course to Yukon teachers and conducted a review of the entrance criteria of some of the Wood Street programs to determine if the programs were accessible to all Yukon students (Government of Yukon). Within the current Yukon curriculum, some opportunities for EXED are provided. Cultural camps and bison hunts are two of the growing number of successful EXED activities happening with community participation (Government of Yukon, 2006).

In light of this very limited amount of recent research available on the process of implementing EXED in Yukon K-12 schools, I have attempted in this study to address this gap. A brief overview of literature regarding educational change is presented next.

Educational Change Theory

From a broader perspective, this study has involved the exploration of a change process. And so, it is fitting that the literature on educational change and improvement strategies, herein referred to as educational change, be included in this review. This section of the literature review will present a brief overview of educational change, including: (a) definitions and understandings of educational change and of curricular change, (b) the driving forces of educational change, and (c) factors that support and limit educational change processes.

According to Michael Fullan (2001), Canada's foremost expert on educational change, the process of educational change could superficially include the use of new or revised materials, teaching approaches and/ or the alteration of beliefs. He adds though, "reform is not just putting into place the latest policy. It means changing the cultures of

the classrooms, the schools, the districts, the universities, and so on" (p. 7). McNeal and Christy (2001) suggest that educational change is founded on the notion that it "is a multilevel process with a role for all stakeholders within the system" (p. 4). McNeal and Christy contribute another facet to the topic by suggesting that change often occurs simultaneously on a number of levels. Often, however, the stratified groups do not act in coordination. More will be said about this challenge later. In addition, McNeal and Christy argue that a change initiative is most effective for producing positive results for learners when the change reflects the localized needs of the school. In other words, those initiating and supporting the change should be linked closely enough with a school to be able to understand the actual needs of the school.

In another article, Fullan (1994) puts forth the notion that educational change is generally driven from the top-down, the bottom-up or a combination of both directions. This view recognizes the hierarchical structure that permeates an educational system. A bottom-up approach does not necessarily refer to teacher-driven initiatives but, rather, can refer to any stratum within the system that is lower on the hierarchical chain relative to another division. The opposite is the case for a top-down approach for which a school board or state educational department is not always or necessarily the driving force (Fullan). It should be noted that in this field of literature the terms "decentralized" and "centralized" are relatively synonymous with "bottom-up" and "top-down" (Fullan).

Curriculum change, as an aspect of educational change, is of particular interest to this study. The change process often involves three broad stages, as in stage 2, 3 and 4 of Figure 3 (McBeath, 1997).

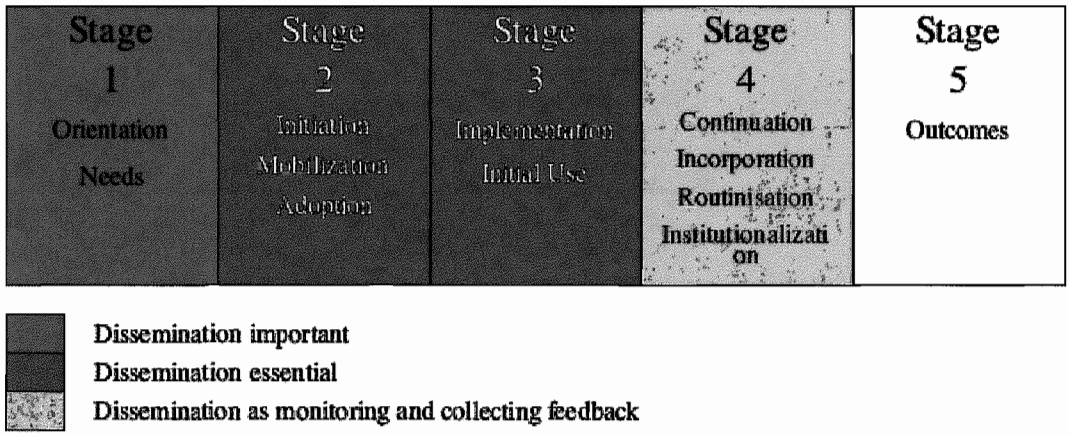

Figure 3. Stages of curriculum change and the importance of dissemination (McBeath, 1997).

The initiation phase, or stage 2, consists of all of the decisions and actions that occur before the change is implemented into the classroom. Stage 3 involves the actual implementation of the change into the classroom. The fourth, or continuation, stage focuses on the processes and decisions that cause the change to either become standardized as part of the learning environment or rejected. McBeath explains that more recently, the first stage, or orientation, has been added. This stage recognizes the prior process that involves determining the need for change. As well, the fifth stage has recently been added. This stage involves measurement of the change to determine if longer-term extension should take place (McBeath). Figure 3 also highlights the role of dissemination in educational change. McBeath argues that dissemination should involve both a "management-marketing perspective and a user-ownership perspective" (¶ 10). A "management-marketing" perspective suggests that leadership needs to come from the instigators of the change, typically at the departmental level (McBeath, ¶ 10). The "user-ownership" perspective involves the creation and maintenance of a professional community of teachers and principals who work in the school/ classroom (McBeath, ¶

10). The combination of these two perspectives contributes to an effective dissemination strategy.

From a historical perspective, the study of contemporary educational change began in the 1960s (Fullan, 2001). A number of authors have suggested that, historically, educational change was guided by rationalist tendencies (Gallagher, 1995; Rust & Freidus, 2001; Sashkin & Egermeier, 1992). True to this philosophy, professional developers and researchers used empirical data to create the information and tools that were to be "passed down" to teachers and administrators to encourage change in their schools. Thus, the rationalists were considered the agents of change. Often it was the case that change simply did not occur and it was the principals and teachers, acting as implementers of the change, that were to blame for not following procedures with the required rigor (Gallagher; Rust & Freidus; Sashkin & Egermeier).

Sashkin and Egermeier (1992) conducted a review and synthesis of school change models and the involved processes. Their review recounted broad patterns of the previous thirty years of research on school change and they suggest that the second and third in the following list are the more recent approaches. They presented the following approaches to how change occurs in education: (a) Rational-scientific approach- assumes that "if people are given valid information that empirical data show would, if applied, lead to improvements, then they would apply that information" (p. 2); (b) Political approach- assumes that when policy controls in the form of mandates, inducements, capacity building and system changing are passed down from power groups, often made into law, then lower-level agents will make changes; and (c) Cultural approach- assumes that change occurs when cultural meanings and values shift and this change is often

brought about by a change agent or organizational leader (Sashkin & Egermeier). Often, one of these strategies was relied upon primarily and the others were supplementary. Rarely was a single approach used in isolation, according to Sashkin and Egermeier.

The authors further review the operational strategies of change that serve to identify what exactly is underlying the change process. The four strategies are: (a) "fix the parts"- this, for example, may involve the change of curricular content and/ or materials, instructional practices or capacities of principals and the change often is brought about through the dissemination of innovations (p. 3); (b) "fix the people"- this involves the improvement of knowledge and skills of teachers and administrators through pre-service training or in-service training (p. 8); (c) "fix the school"- this involves the change of an entire school's culture and its shared values and beliefs that occurs internally and draws upon the skills of the organization's members (p. 10); and (d) "fix the system"- this involves a much more comprehensive restructuring process that draws upon, "the community, the school district, the state education agency, professional development institutions and the even the national level" (Sashkin & Egermeier, 1992, p. 11).

A few studies have pointed to the fact that top-down strategies, when used in isolation, rarely succeed in achieving their prescribed goals (Berman & McLauglin, 1977; Goodlad, 1992; Sarason, 1990; Wilson & Corbett, 1990). In a dated yet substantial study, Berman and Mclauglin found, in their study of the voluntary adoption of federally sponsored educational programs of 293 schools, that school boards often implemented the change for opportunistic reasons. In essence, the garnering of extra short-term funds and the appeasement of bureaucrats acted as motivators rather than serving as change

agents in educational practice for the benefit of learners as was originally espoused as the goal of the program.

Wilson and Corbett (1990) found, in their study of the top-down implementation of mandatory statewide testing in two states in the U.S.A., that teachers' attempts to deliver a more narrow range of curricular content was counter-productive to student learning. Teachers, "narrowed the range of instructional strategies from which they selected means to instruct their students; they narrowed the content of the material they chose to present to students; and they narrowed the range of course offerings available to students" (Wilson & Corbett, p. 207). It was also noted that the reform process was affected by a reduction in teacher motivation, morale and colleague collaboration (Wilson & Corbett).

Sarason (1990) compared typical top-down reform to the creation and improvement of an assembly line. In essence, the workers, or educators, have no choice but to change and the implications of the change for the workers are of little importance to those imposing the change. This, Sarason believes, is one of the root problems of top-down educational change. Goodlad (1992) echoes those sentiments in stating, "top-down, politically driven education reform movements are addressed primarily to restructuring. They have little to say about educating" (p. 238).

At the other end of the scale, several authors have suggested that approaches that employ bottom-up strategies solely are often unsuccessful on some level (Fullan, 2001; Taylor & Teddlie, 1992). In his book on educational change, Fullan explains that reforms that shift the decision making power to schools simply changes the method of governance and does little to actually affect the learning environment. Taylor and

Teddlie studied a school-based management pilot program in 16 schools and compared their results to 17 non-pilot schools. The schools involved in the school-based management program were given more decision-making and management power with which to operate their schools. The researchers found that there were very few differences in teaching strategies used or in teacher collaboration (Taylor & Teddlie).

Fullan (1998) suggests that for educational change to be successful, top-down and bottom-up strategies need to be coordinated in a manner that encourages the development of rapport between the two levels. This process is "difficult because the forces of change are complex, and the strategies needed must constantly engage in a balancing act between too much and too little structure, between top-down desires and bottom-up inclinations" (Fullan, p. 7). In order to build rapport, players from both levels must recognize and fulfill their responsibilities. Top-down players must focus on capacity building and must provide incentives and supports alongside their policy compliance initiatives (Fullan). The bottom-up side simply can't wait for "the system to get its act together" (Fullan, p. 6). Local-level educators, principals, students and parents must take the initiative to wade through the intricacies of the "system" in their efforts to instigate change. Fullan suggests that more research is needed regarding the efficacy of a combined top-down and bottom-up approach to educational change.

More recently Fullan (2000) has suggested, "it takes about three years to achieve successful change in student performance in an elementary school. Depending on size, it takes about six years to do so in a secondary school" (p. 581). Fullan clarifies that these successes have only occurred in a small number of instances, that most of the efforts have not been widely reproduced on a large scale and that there is no assurance that the change

will last. He elaborates on how change can and has been successful in some schools. The development of professional learning communities is essential. Fullan refers to this development as "reculturing" (p. 582). This process involves three changes: (a) an increase in colleague collaboration, (b) an increased focus on student work (through assessment), and (c) a change in instructional practices (Fullan). In addition, schools must now, more than ever, embrace the outside influence of "parents and community, technology, corporate connections, government policy and the wider teaching profession" (p. 582). In essence, new learning occurs when the most vested stakeholders including teachers, parents, community and students share a common rapport.

Rust and Freidus (2001) describe a number of factors that have been identified that correlate with successful change efforts. Rust and Freidus suggest three common conditions from their review of six relevant studies. They are, as follows: (a) "Collaborative cultures that foster professional learning communities", (b) "Instructional practices that are relevant to and fully understood by teachers and students alike", and (c) "Instruction that is linked to the needs of individual students as well as standards of the external community" (Rust & Freidus, p. 3). The authors also emphasize that to increase chances of success with the change, local change agents, including teachers, principals and departmental mentors, must possess certain qualities, including acting as negotiators, nurturers, teacher-learners and curriculum developers (Rust & Freidus).

On the contrary, Rust and Freidus (2001) point to a number of obstacles that are often encountered in the change process. Administrators were cited as gatekeepers to change, as sometimes they are the ones to hold onto beliefs in hierarchical structures thus making it difficult for them to accept change recommendations from teachers. Teachers

and principals may also feel tension during the change process because it is often hard to measure whether or not a new program is being successful. While administrators and school boards often measure success through test scores, teachers and other agents of change may want to probe deeper into areas of student learning or teacher learning. Finally, the authors suggest that more time is often needed for preparation and development of curricular resources (Rust & Freidus).

It would seem that more research is needed on the potential for a combination of top-down and bottom-up strategies. This leaves me with the question of "why are the two strategies considered to be isolated and bifurcated from one another?" Perhaps in exploring this question we can begin to understand the barriers that may exist to the simultaneous utilization of both strategies. This present study may begin to address this query given that the study results (see Chapter 4) point to the success of employing a combined strategy. More will be said about this in subsequent chapters.

Place-Based Education

Altman and Chemers (1984) developed the social systems approach to understanding the world around us. This theory views the environment, culture and people as parts of an integrated system wherein each part plays a role in understanding the other parts and the whole. This idea forms the basis for this section of the literature review. A question that lies central to the educational change process, or, of more relevance to this study, the curriculum change process, is "what should be taught" (Kemp, 2006). The question of "how should it be taught" should also accompany the previous query. Understanding the factors that make EXED suitable for Yukon schools is a topic central to this study. In other words, I wanted to find out about the ways in

which "place" or "location" determines "what is taught and how it is taught". This final section of the literature review offers a brief overview of place-based education including: (a) definitions and understandings of place-based education, (b) intentions of place-based education, and (c) examples of place-based education in northern communities.

A number of writers have offered definitions of place-based pedagogy, which is also known as place-conscious pedagogy (Kemp, 2006; Starnes, 2000; Woodhouse, 2001). Jan Woodhouse (2001) explains that place-based pedagogies "explicitly root the learning experience in the location of the learner- the home, the backyard, the school grounds, the community, the bioregion- the place the learner inhabits. A place-based pedagogy approaches the individual as part of a cultural, political, social and biological context- an ecology" (p. 1). Starnes (2000) states that place-based education can:

> Create learning experiences that: build a group identity and sense of 'we' among teachers and learners; help learners become part of a community larger than their own; use communities as learning laboratories; and ensure that the skills, traits and habits that provide access to educational choices are acquired (p. 43).

The Harvard Graduate School of Education (1999) states that place-based education is aimed at "rooting the work in the local setting, giving greater attention to place, and finding ways to make connections to the community, its history, culture, economic circumstances, arts, flora, fauna and landscapes" (p. 10). Kemp has defined place-based education as "the interconnectedness of communication, physical place, sociality of individuals, and culture" (p. 131). He goes on to suggest that in order to understand the true meaning of place-based education, one must understand curriculum as environment.

And a curricular environment, Kemp explains, combines "culture, identity, social climate, and personal understandings" (p. 132).

In some ways, place-based education represents a challenge to the contemporary standardization reform movements, such as the increase in the usage of standardized testing (Kemp, 2006). Standardized testing, in essence, requires standardized curriculum content. On the other hand, place-based education asks that curriculum content and learning strategies are rooted in the foundations of the local environment and thus may be different between provinces/ territories, districts and even schools (Kemp). Kemp hypothetically asks the question of the standardized reform movement, "students would have the ability to read and write, but what would they read and write about" (p. 133)?

Gruenewald (2005) echoes this sentiment by suggesting that, "formal educational systems in the USA are currently controlled by systems of accountability that disregard place" (p. 280). Place-based education rather, emphasizes the importance of society and the land. From a methodological perspective, place-based "practices and purposes can be connected to experiential learning, contextual learning, problem-based learning, constructivism, outdoor education, indigenous education, environmental and ecological education, bioregional education, democratic education, multi-cultural education, community-based education.... as well as other approaches" (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 3). While the focus on much of place-based education is on the natural environment, Luddick (2001) suggests a much longer list of topics. Place-based curriculum content also considers communication, psychology, government, law, geography, technology and economics as potential subjects (Luddick).

Theobald and Nachtigal (1995) suggest that a focus on place not only aids in reconnecting a student to community, it also acts as a process of community and school renewal. They point out that students have a chance to interact with their community which leads to renewal, "first, by making learning more experiential and more powerful, and second, by providing youth with an ability to understand who they might be in the world" (p.23). Woodhouse (2001) adds that education should "begin where we are" and that when this happens, students gain a greater understanding and respect for the history of the Earth and their community (p. 3).

In general, numerous examples exist of the efficacy of place-based education (Bishop & Fransen, 1998; Null, 2002; Reese, 2004). I present two such studies, specific to northern communities, in the following section (Aylward, 2007; Takano, Higgins & McLaughlin, 2009)

Takano, Higgins and McLaughlin (2009) conducted a study of the Russian Mission School in rural Alaska. The school began utilizing place-based education in 2001 by placing the local culture's subsistence living activities as the focus of the school curriculum. The community is mostly made up of Yup'ik First Nations peoples for whom subsistence and communing with the land were focal points for the culture. The Russian Mission School incorporated subsistence curriculum into grade six to twelve classes. The lessons combined in-class and out-of-class experiential activities. The community members often joined the classes during the outdoor activities to share their expertise. As an example of one of the lessons, "manaqing (ice fishing) started with making a fishing tool, dressing up according to the weather and the forecast, getting other gear ready, getting to a specific place, knowing where and how to make a hole and how

to treat the fish once they were caught" (p. 354). The researchers reported that the new philosophy of learning at the school had a few positive effects. They noted that the school had changed from being seen by the community as a disrupter of traditional ways of life to being seen as a supporter of community values. As well, parents suggested that their children were getting their identities back by establishing a connection to their heritage and ancestors.

In addition, it was recognized that the parents of some of the students were not able to take their children onto the land and that the school was fulfilling that role (Takano et al., 2009). Teachers reported that 14 previous "drop-outs" returned to school the year following the program's inception and fewer students were showing up late to school. On the contrary, a few challenges were reported. Some of the students were apprehensive about going out onto the land simply because of their lack of experience with the proposed activity. These students were combative and refused to follow instructions during the time before departing for outdoor activities. As well, some parents had concerns with the safety of their child simply because of their lack of understanding and experience with the activities (Takano et al.).

Aylward (2007) offers a critique of her experiences as a teacher in a Nunavut school in Northern Canada. Specifically, she discusses the role of cultural relevance in educational change in the territory of Nunavut. Since 1999, the Nunavut Department of Education has used a set of principals that are based upon the Inuit ways of life to guide policy and planning. The recent reform agenda for the territory involved "implementing stronger bilingual education models, rewriting the Education Act and creating culturally relevant curricula for all grade levels K-12" (Aylward, p. 2). Aylward noted that perhaps

the most challenging objective of the reform movement was to try to re-think the Euro-centric worldview that has permeated standardized curriculum content for so long. At the time of her study, she suggested that this challenge is ongoing and that the principles of the Inuit Indigenous Peoples are beginning to work their way into curriculum through a community negotiation process.

This present study has the potential to contribute to the body of literature regarding EXED as a form of place-based education in northern communities. The details of my research plan follow in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Methods

This next chapter will provide an overview of the design of the study. I will begin this chapter by situating this study within the qualitative research paradigm. The chapter then goes on to discuss: the methodological framework; site selection and sampling procedures; techniques for gaining entry; data collection procedures; data analysis techniques; trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

Qualitative Research Paradigm

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore and describe the process of implementing experiential education in Yukon K-12 schools with a particular focus on illuminating the supporting and the challenging factors YDE staff members, teachers and principals experience as they endeavor to implement their own vision and the YDE's vision for offering experiential education in Yukon K-12 schools. The following five questions guided the research:

1. What are the YDE teachers', principals', and staff members' understandings of experiential education? And, what are their perceptions regarding the driving forces behind the implementation of EXED?
2. What factors contribute to EXED's suitability for Yukon Schools?
3. How is the YDE facilitating the implementation of experiential education in K-12 schools? And, what other factors are supporting the implementation of EXED?
4. What are the factors that challenge YDE staff members', teachers' and principals' implementation of EXED in K-12 schools?
5. How is the process of implementing EXED affected by the supporting and challenging factors?

Chapters 1 and 2 highlighted the literature relevant to this study including: EXED philosophy; EXED in K-12 schools; and EXED in Yukon K-12 schools. This review revealed a number of gaps within the body of literature. In general, and as indicated in Chapter 2, there is a paucity of research related to EXED as both a philosophy and a methodology and its implementation in the K-12 classroom. Second, very little research exists on the use of EXED as a teaching and learning philosophy in K-12 schools in the Yukon. Third, there seems to be a need for more research regarding the successes and challenges teachers and, in particular, principals face in endeavoring to implement EXED philosophy into K-12 schools. Finally, a need for more research exists in relation to educational change and place-based education in Yukon and in northern communities as a whole. These limitations found in the literature helped to inform the key research questions and, ultimately, directed the design of this study.

A qualitative research paradigm was employed in the design of this study. According to Merriam (1998), the qualitative research strategy is based on the view that, "reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds" (p. 6). In other words, the context, or social world, within which an individual is situated, must be understood in order for the individual to be understood (Merriam). The nature of the exploration that I proposed suggested that in order for me to understand individuals, I must also understand the influences of other individuals and of their social and political contexts. Thus, the key to engaging in this type of research was to do so from participants' lived perspectives rather than from the perspectives of the researcher (Merriam). I will further enumerate the ways in which this qualitative research paradigm was employed in the upcoming sections, starting with the methodological framework.

Methodological Framework

Working on a practical level within the research design, the strategy of inquiry or methodology provides specific direction for procedures (Creswell, 2003). The qualitative case study tradition of inquiry has been employed in this study as the methodological framework. Robert Yin (1984) refers to the case study research methodology as, "the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" (p. 13). In addition, Yin suggests that "what" questions are also suitable for case study research.

An exploratory case study in education provides a detailed account of the study's phenomenon as well as basic information about an area of research in which, previously, little research has been conducted (Merriam). With these aforementioned guiding theoretical principles in mind, alongside the aforementioned gap in relevant research literature, I thus formed the research questions. Questions beginning with "what" can be either enumerative or exploratory (Yin, 1984). The "what" questions used in this study were exploratory in nature in that they were used to try to develop propositions for further study using questions framed by "how" (Yin). This study employs "how" questions in exploring the supports and challenges related to implementing experiential programs in Yukon schools. Yin describes that "how" questions are most suitable when trying to explain a phenomenon as these questions allow for participant responses to elucidate multiple links to events over time. In this manner, participants were able to recall and describe experiences they had had with implementing EXED.

This study also fits Yin's (1984) description of a case study in that, I, as the primary investigator, had little if any control over the events of investigation. In other words, case study is best used to study contemporary events that have not been manipulated by the researcher (Yin). It should be noted that I have had an impact on the results of this study simply because my biases and assumptions have guided my choices of research design and, in this way, have influenced the results (Merriam, 1998) (more will be said about this in a subsequent section). Third, the focus of this study was to examine the contemporary issue of educational programming in the real-life context of the Yukon Territory (Yin).

I have outlined the three fundamental factors of this study that have made the case study framework an appropriate choice, including: the types of questioning; the lack of researcher control over the events of study; and that the case is situated in a real-life context rather than an experimental one (Yin). More details about the components of case study research design will follow.

Case study is sometimes seen only as a method for data collection and, thus, only represents a product (Stake (1995). However, when a set of characteristic guidelines is observed, case study can be used as a research design and, in this sense, can represent a process and a product (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1984). Yin states that there are five components of a case study research design, namely:

1. A study's questions
2. Its propositions, if any
3. Its unit(s) of analysis
4. The logic linking the data to the propositions

5. The criteria for interpreting the findings (p.29).

As previously described, the questions of "what" and "how" guide this study and are, as Yin (1984) describes, best suited to case study research. Propositions, derived from the research questions, act as guidance tools in showing the themes that should be studied within the scope of a research project (Yin). Propositions are informed, as well, by the literature. It is important to clarify propositions so as not to attempt to collect data on everything there is to know, as some data is irrelevant to the true purpose of the research (Yin). In light of Yin's recommendations, I thus framed my interview questions with this study's propositions in mind.

I have also considered the units of analysis in the design of this study (Yin, 1984). Creswell (1998) explains that a case study is an exploration of a "bounded system" (p.61). Yin refers to the binding parameters as units of analysis. Units of analysis or stakeholders serve to contextualize this case study and to define it as unique in terms of the location or institution and of the people involved (Yin). Case studies can be defined as single or multiple and as holistic or embedded and the choice of which strategy to use will define the study's units of analysis (Yin, 1984).

Due to the exploratory nature of this project, a single case study methodology was employed. The single case study method was chosen because this genre can be useful when trying to gain a general and holistic perspective of a specific case so that all of the relevant relationships at play can be realized (Yin, 1984). Having multiple units of analysis can often lead to the opportunity for extensive analysis, thereby enhancing the outcomes of the study (Yin). This study made use of an embedded approach and identified three different sub-units of analysis within the single case study unit (Yin). For

example, in this exploratory case study, the broadest defining unit was the Yukon Territory K-12 education system and the secondary, embedded sub-units consist of teachers, principals and YDE staff members. Defining these units at the outset of the study aided in guiding the interview questions. During participant questioning, it allowed for questions to be asked regarding the relationships between the sub-units and for the uniqueness of sub-units within the broadest unit to be explored. For example, I asked about the relationship between teachers and YDE staff in posing queries about how YDE staff support teachers in the implementation of EXED. The next section will explain how these units of analysis, referred to as sites and samples, were identified.

Site Selection and Sampling Procedures

The selection of specific sites and the sampling of participants was ongoing throughout the research process. The foremost objective in site and participant selection was to maximize what could be learned (Stake, 1995). Yet, this objective of attempting to maximize the learning was simultaneously tempered by some very practical, "lived" constraints, including available resources (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). I did not sample all of Yukon's schools simply because many of the rural schools are located at a great distance from Whitehorse. Many of these schools outside of Whitehorse would have required a flight or a long-distance drive to reach. I simply did not have the time or the financial resources to undertake such an effort. As mentioned in chapter 1, the scope of this study includes the Yukon K-12 education system as perceived by Whitehorse-based YDE staff members, principals and teachers. Therefore, the inclusion of all of Yukon's schools in the potential study sample would have extended beyond the scope of the study. With this in mind, I employed purposive and network sampling techniques for choosing

sites and interview participants within the Whitehorse area (Willis, 2007). Though the broad sample site was the Whitehorse area, I have chosen to write this report and present the results within a Yukon-wide context because the respondents chose to either speak of individual schools within and beyond the Whitehorse area or more generally of the Yukon education system as a whole. In particular, the interviewed YDE staff members all spoke about work experiences that included and extended beyond the Whitehorse area.

Merriam (1998) suggests that, in qualitative research, there is no set recipe for choosing how many participants to sample. Essentially, data should be collected so as to represent a variety of perspectives within the case and to learn as much relevant information as is possible within the working constraints (Merriam). As the purpose of this study is to provide a holistic understanding of the case, I explored one elementary and one secondary school to provide two perspectives. In total, seven participants were interviewed, including: three YDE staff members; two principals; and two teachers. I had originally intended to interview two more schools, including two teachers and two principals more, but decided to scale the sample size back as advised by my committee. This change resulted in the study becoming more exploratory than explanatory, according to Yin's (1984) description of this distinction. In essence, as Yin suggests, an exploratory case study attempts to give first impressions of a case rather than trying to offer explanations and requires only enough participants to begin to understand the phenomenon of study. On the other hand, an explanatory case study would require more participants so as to increase the validity of its explanations (Yin).

Purposive sampling methods are often used in case study designs (Merriam, 1998). A purposive sample is a non-representative group of a larger population and is identified to fulfill a specific need (Merriam, 1998). This sampling strategy was employed in this study because it allowed for a sample to be identified that fit a certain set of outlined criteria (Merriam). During this study, I identified principals and teachers who have had experience with attempting to offer opportunities for EXED and YDE staff members who were involved in creating and supporting EXED opportunities in schools. With these guiding criteria in mind, I utilized a network sampling technique that involved asking participants to refer me to other participants that match the purposive sampling criteria (Merriam). The process will be further explained in the following section.

Sites and participants were purposively chosen in two phases. I started by first contacting the Deputy Minister of Education for Yukon and requested that I be placed in contact with the person at the YDE who was in charge of EXED in Yukon schools. I was unsure at the time if such a person existed. To my delight, I was referred to the first interview participant. At the end of the first interview, I asked to be referred to three other YDE staff members and three schools in the Whitehorse area. I always asked the participant to choose referrals that "had some experience with implementing EXED in the school/ classroom." I clarified, that their choices did not necessarily need to reflect individuals who were overly successful but, rather, simply had some experience. During this process, I always asked for more referrals than were needed so that I had a back-up participant available in case one of my requests for participation was denied. In addition, I requested that the participants rank their referrals according to each referral's relevance to this study. On occasion, I was asked to clarify this request and my response was,

"which referral do you believe to have the most relevant experience as it relates to the offering of EXED in Yukon schools?" After interviewing the other two YDE staff members, I again asked to be referred to three Whitehorse area schools. Within the nine referrals from the YDE staff members, there was enough agreement to point me toward the principals of the two most frequently cited schools for interview requests. Specifically, all three staff members referred to one of the schools as their first choice and two staff members referred the same school as their second choice. Again, at the end of the interviews with the principals, I asked that I be referred to two teachers in each of their schools. I asked the principals to select a first choice and a second choice of teachers from their school for me to contact, again using the same criteria as outlined previously.

This purposive sampling strategy was employed so as to learn as much as possible about the research questions (Merriam, 1998). The initial interviews with YDE staff members occurred between November of 2009 and January of 2010 (see Appendix A). The interviews then took place with the two principals in February and March of 2010. Finally, I interviewed the two teachers in March and April of 2010. One teacher declined to participate and did not offer a reason for the decision. I was then able to shift my request to the second teacher that was suggested by the principal of the school.

In the end, seven YDE employees were interviewed for this study. The number of years that the participants had worked for the YDE ranged between two and thirty-three. For the purpose of presenting the results, the larger group of seven was divided into three sub-groups related to sub-units of analysis. The "YDE staff members" group consisted of three department level employees whose jobs were in some way specifically linked to the

YDE's role in offering EXED in Yukon schools. All three of these participants had at some point in their careers been teachers and one had been a principal as well. The "teachers" group consisted of two Whitehorse based teachers whom both held specialized roles as teachers of experiential education based curriculum in their schools. One teacher was from an elementary school and the other from a high school. The "principals" group was comprised of two Whitehorse based principals and each was a colleague of one of the teachers in this study. Both principals had been teachers in different provinces previously and one had been a superintendent.

Gaining Entry

A study quickly comes to a halt if it is realized that potential data sources cannot be accessed (Yin, 1984). Gaining access to interview participants is thus an important consideration in the research procedures (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Willis, 2007). Gatekeepers are those people who grant access to a research site (Yin, 1984). The gatekeepers of this study were the YDE staff members who control access to specific schools and principals who control access to teachers within their school. Stake suggests that a school board should know of a study's intended procedures, the time span and the potential burden on stakeholders. As part of the process of trying to identify the intent of this study and the need for the research, I made e-mail contact with the Deputy Minister of Education for the YDE prior to the inception of this study. The assistant to the Deputy Minister then referred me to a staff member who was working on various aspects of EXED programming in Yukon K-12 schools. I then engaged in an e-mail dialogue with the staff member, indicating that I wanted to discuss the potential timeliness and relevance of my proposed study topic. I gathered from our conversations that my

proposed study had the potential to be timely and relevant to the YDE as they were in the process of trying to gather an inventory of existing EXED programs in Yukon schools. As a result of this preliminary process, the YDE was already aware that I would be proposing this study in May 2009 (see Appendix A) and they were aware of its basic purpose through e-mail conversations with my initial contact person. This task was undertaken in order to begin to build a rapport with stakeholders and gatekeepers. Upon gaining access to the sites and samples, I was then able to focus on collecting data.

Data Collection Procedures

Procedures for data collection and the types of information deemed appropriate for collection are informed by, "the researcher's theoretical orientation, by the problem and purpose of the study, and by the sample selected" (Merriam, 1998, p. 70). These three factors helped to determine that, for this study, interviews were the primary sources of data and documents and reflective notes were secondary sources. The case study methodology suggests that multiple methods of data collection be used in order to provide for a holistic understanding of the phenomenon (Yin, 1984). Not only have I employed multiple methods, in gathering information through interviews, documents and reflective notes, I have also queried multiple sources in attempting to create a holistic impression of the case (Merriam). Each method had its own purpose in addressing the research questions and each had its own set of guiding principles and will be enumerated in more detail in this next section.

Document exploration.

The term "documents" can refer to any number of sources such as newspaper articles, annual reports, meeting minutes, correspondence, professional development

course outlines or government policy documents (Stake, 1995). The case study methodology informed my decision to use document exploration as I was seeking a holistic view of the phenomenon of study (Creswell, 2003). In other words, I was seeking to explore the research questions from a variety of perspectives, and documents provided but one. In collecting data from documents, the researcher must have his research questions in mind to know what to look for and must also be open to unexpected clues that may surface (Stake). As document exploration could go on endlessly, it is important to set a timeline for this to occur. I began collecting documents, in January 2009 as this study's proposal was being written. The information in these documents served to complement the interview results and to guide some of the research questions. For example, interview participants were queried on their thoughts regarding specifics of two of the YDE's educational reports. The collection of documents ended, in April 2010, when the final interview was completed (see Appendix A). Merriam describes that choosing the documents to explore is a systematic process that is informed by the research questions.

I attempted to seek out and purposefully explore the following documents with several guiding intentions in mind. Yukon Department of Education annual reports, administrative, policy, mandate and curricular documents were originally sought in an effort to find out more about YDE supported opportunities for EXED in Yukon K-12 schools. The YDE reports and documents were used in this study as data sources because they outlined intentions, definitions and the history related to EXED in Yukon schools. This information aided contextualization or, in other words, set the scene for more specific results to follow. These same documents were also explored to find information

on how the YDE is facilitating the recommended integration of EXED into Yukon schools. All of the analyzed documents were accessible to the public as online resources from the YDE website.

It is important to recognize that all documents are written for a certain audience (Hesse-Biber, 2006). By looking into the process in which the documents were written, authenticity was assessed (Merriam, 1998). I was mindful of the details of the development process by looking into who wrote the document and for which audience the document was intended. The YDE annual reports, which comprise the bulk of the document analysis, were created by YDE staff members on behalf of Yukon's Minister of Education as he or she is mandated to table an annual report in the Legislative Assembly following the end of the school year (Government of Yukon, 2005). The *One Vision, Multiple Pathways Report* was prepared for the YDE by *Proactive Information Services*. This company was subcontracted to provide a review of secondary school programming in Whitehorse. The YDE and its employees was the primary intended audience and the general public was secondary (Belanger, Bremner & Lee, 2008). An executive committee from the YDE including Yukon First Nations partners in education created the *Education Reform Report*. The report was intended for Yukon First Nations Governments, citizens and other partners in education (*Education Reform Project*, 2007). The exploration of the mentioned documents served to corroborate the data collected in the interview and reflective note collection processes (Yin, 1984). More will be said about this in the Results chapter that follows.

Interviews.

Interviews served as the primary source of data collection in this study and Merriam suggests that they tend to be the most common form of data collection in qualitative studies in education (1998). Interviews are, "one of the richest sources of data in a case study and usually the most important type of data to be collected" (Hesse-Biber, 2006, p. 229). An interview should be treated as a conversation with a purpose as the intent is to have dialogue that is focused on exploring the research questions (Merriam). Interviews are an important part of the qualitative case study methodology because they allow for personal and individual stories to be told by participants. These "stories" are explored in a way that allows the participant to show how they have constructed their own perception of the situation or phenomenon being studied (Willis, 2007). The following will enumerate how participants were asked to share their stories.

Once interview participants were identified, I began by sending a letter of invitation to participate (see Appendix D). If the invitation was accepted, I then proceeded with arranging the interview by: (a) sending a letter of informed consent (see Appendix E), (b) setting up a date and time to meet, and (c) arranging the meeting location. One of the seven original requests for participation was denied. Thus, I sent out eight letters of invitation in order to obtain seven interview participants.

The one-on-one interviews used in this study were semi-structured and ranged from one to one and a half hours in length (Willis, 2007). The semi-structured interviews started with a list of pre-determined questions to guide the interview (see Appendix F) that was referred back to as the dialogue developed. As well, when the interview participants started to speak tangentially, a decision was made on how to proceed. I tried

to determine if the tangent was related to the questioning and if the new information would serve the purpose of the study. If so, then the respondent was encouraged to continue on. For example, if a participant began speaking about a topic that I had planned to address later, I would allow the conversation to continue. If not, then I re-directed the participant with relevant questions. This semi-structured approach also informed a mixed style of questioning (Stake, 1995). Asking structured questions allowed me to seek very specific information while asking open-ended questions afforded the participant the freedom to be more exploratory with the response (Stake, 1995).

I conducted face-to-face interviews with all seven participants. This type of interview was beneficial in that it allowed for the building of trust and rapport with the participant (Willis). This rapport building allowed for a more genuine conversational process to develop as both the interviewee and I gained respect and trust for each other (Willis).

Merriam (1998) suggests that case studies allow for new information to emerge from data sources and that newly emergent themes shape the interview process. A list of ever-evolving guiding questions was used in the interviews (see Appendix F). The ordering of questions was the biggest change that happened to the script. As well, some questions were reworded after the first interview, as they sounded different when I actually heard them in conversation. Prior to the interview, the participant was informed of the general themes of the interview questions and I indicated that there was an intention to complete an agenda (Stake, 1995). Merriam describes that in informing the participant of the general interview themes, the interview process can be enhanced by the

participants' forethought. I thus informed the participants of the five key research questions and then asked if they had any questions regarding the topics.

Stake (1995) and Merriam (1998) both charge the interviewer to remain flexible with the interview script and to make changes as deemed necessary. I heeded this advice on a few occasions. For example, one of the very first questions I asked was, "Would you prefer that we use EXED, EL or another name for this topic in our conversation today; what is the common language that you use to talk about this?" I was originally prepared to ask whether or not EXED and EL have different meanings to them. However, in hearing very mixed responses to the first question, I decided that the second question was inappropriate and far too heavily weighted in EXED/ EL theory. In essence, the question was answered without having it to be asked. For the most part, the very individualized responses to defining the topic indicated that each person had, in stating their own definitions, blurred the lines of the neat little boxes into which I had originally tried to place the definition of each of the terms of EXED, EL, outdoor education (OE) and so on. Thus, I kept the first question and simply asked that they then define or explain their chosen terminology.

I recorded the interviews with a tape recorder and took additional reflective notes. Interviews were held at locations that were both convenient and comfortable for the participant. I quickly learned to suggest that we find a quiet and somewhat secluded location after completing the third interview in the very noisy and distracting café that was suggested by the third participant. Whenever possible, I attempted to host the interviews in similar physical spaces so as to limit the influence that different spaces may have had on the responses of the participants (Merriam, 1998). Interviews were either

held at the participant's school or at the public library with the exception of the café on one occasion.

The interviewing process began in November 2009 and ended in April 2010 (see Appendix A). Originally, the data collection period was scheduled to take place between July 2009 and September 2009. However, I did not receive ethics clearance from the YDE until September 23, 2009 and the data collection period thus needed to be extended. As well, if follow up interviews needed to take place after the initial collection period was over, I would have returned to the site to do so. For example, Merriam (1998) states that new evidence may arise at any point in the process that may re-direct the researcher back to the participants who were already interviewed. The emergent nature of case study research suggests that as new lines of investigation are realized and more connections are made, the interviewing process may change (Merriam). No new evidence arose that suggested I should interview participants again.

Reflective notes.

In addition to recording the interview conversation, reflective notes were created during and after interviews. Steier (1992), posits that, "the research process itself must be seen as socially constructing a world or worlds, with the researcher included in, rather than outside, the body of their own research" (p. 2). The reflective notes took the form of reflective notes that represented my own interpretations and thoughts (Creswell, 2003). Bogdan and Biklen (1992), suggest that these notes can be, "speculation, feelings, problems, ideas, hunches, impressions, and prejudices" (p. 121). The use of reflective notes, again, helps to realize one of the goals of case study research - to explore the specific case from multiple perspectives. The reflective notes were useful during the data

analysis process as reminders. Due to the reflective nature of the notes, I was able to recollect key thoughts that I had during and immediately following the interviews. A synthesizing thought process allowed me to continuously combine a number of similar ideas, from different interviews, into coherent themes. Referring back to these notes during the data analysis phase acted as an aid to the coding process. An abstracting thought process permitted me to extract important problems that arose during interviews to try to formulate theories of understanding that were later addressed and linked back to the body of literature in the discussion chapter. If the opportunity had arisen, I may have attended a YDE board meeting that was relevant to the topic of EXED in Yukon schools. However, no such opportunity presented itself.

A combination of document exploration, interviewing and reflective note collection served as the sources of data. The next section will describe the data analysis procedures that were on-going through the data collection process and that occured after the data collection process.

Data Analysis

According to Yin (1984), analyzing case study evidence, "consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, or otherwise recombining the evidence, to address the initial propositions of the study" (p. 99). Data analysis is often the least understood aspect of the case study methodology and very few formulas exist for taking on the task (Yin). A number of the suggestions made by theorists were observed in this study. The data collected through interviews and document exploration were analyzed. As mentioned previously, the collected reflective notes served to add my own thoughts when needed.

Stake (1995) claims that, "there is no particular moment when data analysis begins. Analysis is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilations" (p. 71). Analysis in this study was an on-going process that served to draw out emergent themes. Merriam explains that during an interview the researcher should be ready to add, change or remove questions based on how the investigation is relating to the research problems. As well, after each interview the researcher should be analyzing the newly acquired data so that new themes can be explored in the next interview or questions can be asked differently (Stake). Attention to this on-going analysis process allowed for this study to remain emergent and flexible as explicated above.

In all but one case, the taped interviews were transcribed within one month of the date of the interview (see Appendix A). The respondents were then offered the opportunity to review their transcript so that they could check for accuracy (Patton, 2002). None of the participants requested their transcript for review.

The qualitative paradigm encourages the use of both inductive and deductive analysis (Willis, 2007). Deductive analysis tends to move from the general to the specific while inductive analysis moves in reverse by first drawing meaning out of data (Willis). Analysis of the data for this present study involved both methods. The deductive process was guided by the five key research questions and by the literature that was reviewed. In essence, I sifted through the data with certain themes in mind so as to tease out specific aspects of the phenomenon of study.

I began this process by creating main categories based on the five research questions. Within each of the categories I defined some initial themes, herein referred to as codes. For the first research question, I established a main category entitled EXED

DEFINITIONS which contained EXED, EL, Other and YDE Definition as codes. For the same research question, I also created the main category of EXED in YDE MANDATE/ VISION that stood alone as its own code containing examples relevant to the category. A third main category, SPECTRUM LOCATION, was associated with the first research question and it contained three codes. For the second research question, I created the main category EXED SUITABILITY FACTORS that contained External Resources/ Opportunities, First Nations Influence, Northern Community Predisposition and EXED Importance as codes. The main category titled SUPPORTING FACTORS was established in relation to the third research question. This category contained YDE Facilitation Tools as a sub-category as well as a number of codes. CHALLENGING FACTORS was the main category that represented the fourth research question and it contained a number of related codes. Finally, the last research question was addressed within ANECDOTAL EXAMPLES that contained Success Examples and Challenge Examples as codes. Most of the codes within the main categories were pre-established and were related to the questions I asked and, ultimately, were informed by the literature.

In working through the data in an inductive manner, I employed a constant comparative analysis technique that involved comparing and contrasting interviews to listen for agreement and disagreement between participants (Merriam, 1998). In this manner, Berg (2004) suggests that the researcher treats the reading process, "as a passport to listening to the words of the text and understanding better the perspective(s) of the producer of these words" (p. 269). This allowed for a few of the codes to emerge from the data (Merriam, 1998). In the results section, I identify for the reader any of the codes that were arrived at via this inductive process.

Atlas.ti computer software was used for the coding process as well as for organizing and combining codes within the main categories. Yin (2003) suggests that powerful analysis tools such as Atlas.ti are beneficial, as in this case, when "the narrative text represents a verbatim record of an interviewee's remarks" (p. 110). In choosing to collect, analyze and report on the data at a geographical distance from my supervisor and other mentors, I was, in essence, choosing to engage in my own experiential education (and in this case, "experimental education") in learning how to use Atlas.ti. Of course, this meant that more time was needed to "train'" myself but it also meant that the depth of my learning was that much greater, as is often the case when one learns through a process of discovery.

In total, the initial deductive data analysis process resulted in the establishment of 52 codes. As new codes were created, I decided during the coding process whether the code should remain as its own unique code or if it should be merged with another similar code. For example, the codes "funding" and "equipment/ materials" were merged together because of their close relation. This happened only on a few occasions. Relevant quotations from the interview transcripts were then linked with specific codes.

Correspondence refers to the finding of consistency within the identified codes (Stake). These consistencies, or patterns, represent agreement among the data and are the basis from which findings are drawn. Once the interview data was coded, I created document families (teachers, principals and staff members) and code families to be used with the Atlas.ti function called the "query tool". The "query tool" allowed me to explore the relationships between document families and codes, code families and document families and between specific codes of interest. I looked for correspondence or

contrast within these queries. For example, I was able to analyze the frequency of occurrences and differences between teachers' references to specific supporting factors and principals' references to the same factors.

I was able to add to the results section graphical representations of certain categories for the purposes of illuminating the frequencies of the codes contained within. Atlas.ti refers to these graphics as "network views". "Network views" also show the relationships between the codes presented in the graphic. For example, Figure 4 shows a "network view" for the category "CHALLENGING FACTORS". The links connecting the themes or codes to the category show the relationships that exist. For instance, based on this model, "teacher apprehension" is a "CHALLENGING FACTOR". The first number in the brackets represents the groundedness or frequency of occurrence. In other words, this number shows how many quotations are linked to a code. The codes are arranged in descending order from left to right based on their frequencies. The second number represents the density of the code or, in other words, the number of codes to which it is related. The analysis of this data relied, for the most part, on the code frequencies.

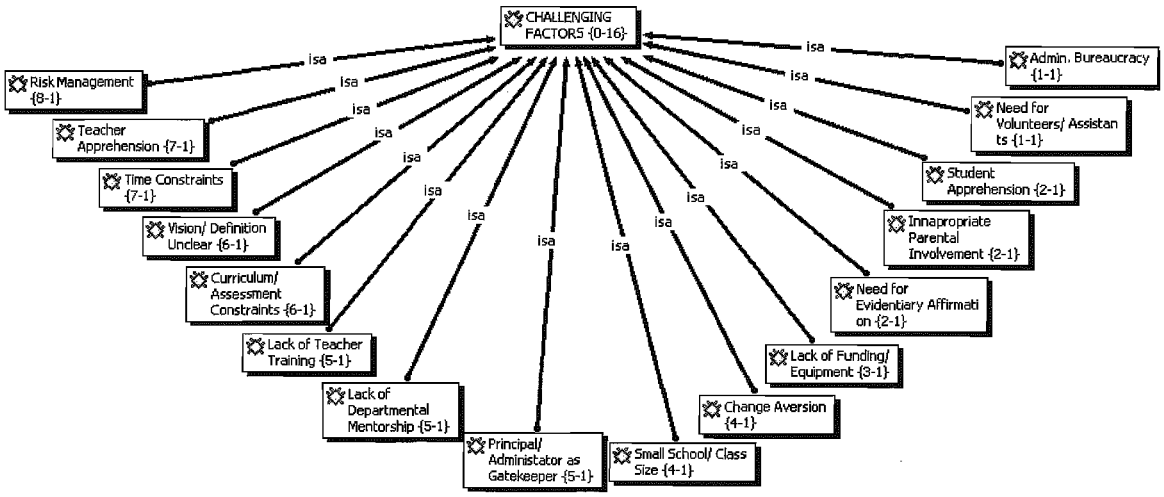

Figure 4. Example of a "Network View".

In addition to interview data, I collected documents and reflective notes. Some of the analysis of the YDE reports and policy documents was done prior to interviewing participants. For this, I scanned the documents for references to the YDE's role in promoting experiential education in Yukon schools. Data gathered from these documents served to create and inform some of the interview questions and were specifically referred to during conversation. I also examined the documents, during the main analysis phase, for examples of YDE's understandings and definitions of EXED. The results of this scan are integrated in the following chapter as supplements to the interview data.

Yin (2003) suggests three analytic strategies for conducting case study analysis. This study employs, what Yin calls, a "descriptive framework" (p. 114). A descriptive framework is best suited, as in this instance, to descriptive case studies in which the analysis is segmented into the sections or chapters that are chosen for presenting the results (Yin).

I have created three distinct sections within the results chapter. Within each section, the relevant category or categories exist as their own sub-headings. When applicable, the broad-based results associated with each category are briefly described. Finally, the results related to each code contained within each category are enumerated. This structural flow permeates the entire results chapter.

In addition, I have ordered the presentation, simply for the sake of maintaining consistency, in such a way that one will find results highlighted by grouping in the order of YDE staff members followed by principals followed by teachers. I have done this so that data can be compared and contrasted between groups. I chose not to attribute individual quotations to participants and have thus chosen to not use pseudonyms in the presentation of results. While I do recognize that the use of pseudonyms has the benefit of allowing each participant's story to be "followed" throughout the results chapter, after careful thought I chose to view participant anonymity as paramount. It is important to note that I have not analyzed the data on an individual participant basis for a couple of reasons. First, the Yukon education system is made up of a relatively small community of colleagues. I believe that it would have been too easy for a non-participant YDE employee to decipher the identities of the participants based on the paraphrases and participant quotations provided in the results chapter. In lieu of this, participants are referred to by their group affiliation and their responses are presented in a random order within their grouping. In addition, I did not find evidence in the body of literature that would suggest that there are reported differences based on demographics such as age, gender or years of work experience. I did, however, find that different results were

reported between job groups, such as administrators, principals and teachers. Thus, I decided that the data should, in part, be analyzed by group differences and similarities.

Trustworthiness

Central to the notion of trustworthiness is the issue of consistency between the results and the data collected (Merriam, 1998). Merriam states that a researcher can develop trustworthiness in the study in three ways. As per Merriam's suggestions, I have ensured that my position and assumptions on the problem were well defined so that the reader is not left with the task of assuming what my biases may be (LeCompte & Preissle, as cited in Merriam, 1998). For example, I have outlined my intention to provide this report to the YDE with the hope that it will serve to advance the use of EXED in Yukon schools. As well, I identified my underlying assumptions in the Introductory Chapter. In addition, I have used data triangulation in a holistic sense in that multiple perspectives from multiple stakeholder groups are provided on each research question. Lastly, I produced an audit trail by keeping reflective notes of the interview events. These describe in detail the actual methods used in collecting each piece of data and all of the situational differences that were encountered. Further, qualitative researchers must be attentive to issues of construct validity, internal validity and external validity in order to assure trustworthiness (Yin, 1984). These issues will be considered in the following sections.

Construct validity.

Construct validity refers to the notion of designing the research with the correct operating procedures in mind (Yin, 1984). Yin suggests that construct validity is an important consideration to clarify so that others can review the research design to

determine whether or not the methods were appropriately chosen. There are a couple of ways in which construct validity was attended to. First, multiple sources of data were collected to ensure that the data represented a holistic view of the research landscape (Yin). To accomplish this, I interviewed a number of different stakeholders, analyzed documents, and recorded reflective notes. In quantitative studies, the employment of triangulation encourages the researcher to look for truth in the places where the data converges in agreement. However, the qualitative paradigm suggests that data are independently valuable (Willis, 2007). For example, Mathison (1988) suggests, "shifting the notion of triangulation away from 'a technological solution for ensuring validity' and instead relying on a 'holistic understanding' of the situation (p. 17). Triangulation, in this sense, was simply a method for gaining multiple perspectives on focused issues

Second, a chain of evidence has been created to link the study questions to the final conclusions (Yin, 1984). Creating this chain of evidence involved three steps, including: (a) citation of data base in the results; (b) enumerating the conditions in which the data was collected, such as time and place; and (c) by showing that the data collection procedures were consistent with the proposed methods (Yin).

Internal validity.

Internal validity is concerned with matching research findings to reality (Merriam, 1998). Of course, the researcher cannot achieve a perfect match to reality in his findings because he is acting as an interpreter in choosing what to study and what leads to follow. With this in mind, I attempted to enhance internal validity in a few ways (Merriam). As the researcher, I spent a sufficient amount of time collecting data so as to best match the findings to the reality of the specific case. I have also asked colleagues in my advisory

committee to comment on the findings and the methods used to attain the data (Merriam). Third, I have clarified my own assumptions and biases from which the reader of this study can then make inferences (Merriam). Finally, I have recorded reflective notes. These reflective notes have not been formally analyzed. Rather, they have served to give context to certain situations and to provide another link in the chain of evidence (Merriam).

External validity.

Traditionally, external validity dealt with the concept of generalizing findings (Yin, 1984). However, the extent to which this study's findings can be applied to other situations is not a concern because I was interested in exploring a specific phenomenon within its context. I am not concerned with whether or not the findings can be representative of other similar situations. It is my hope and my intention that the findings from this study will serve to inform the YDE and its stakeholders in future decisions and actions. My intention at the outset consisted of being able to conclude this study with an ability to articulate, to YDE, some practical findings for the purposes of supporting the integration of EXED in Yukon K-12 schools. In other words, it was not my primary intention to simply contribute to filling a gap in the literature. That said, this study might have aspects in its methodology, for example, that may be applicable to another study. This is for the reader to decide. As well, I have used a multi-site design to maximize the potential that the results could inform or transfer to other situations (Merriam, 1998).

Ethical Considerations

Given that this study involved interactions with humans, a number of ethical considerations have been taken into account. Merriam (1998) explains that, "In

qualitative studies, ethical dilemmas are likely to emerge with regard to the collection of data and in the dissemination of findings" (p. 213). In using different sources of data, I needed to consider the ethics of research conduct from a variety of perspectives. A proposal of this research was submitted to the Brock University Research Ethics Board (REB) for review in May of 2009 and to the YDE board of ethics in July of 2009. Ethical clearance was obtained June 24, 2009 from Brock University following one round of clarification required by the Brock REB and September 23, 2009 from YDE ethics board (see Appendix A). Briefly, the following sections discuss consideration regarding informed consent and the management of data.

Informed consent.

In collecting data via interviews it is important to recognize the associated risks (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995). Interview participants were sent a letter of invitation that outlined the purpose of the study and their potential role in it (see Appendix D). If they chose to participate, an letter of informed consent (see Appendix E) was then sent that described the voluntary and confidential nature of the interview process that had to be signed in order for the interview to occur. At the outset of the interview, interviewees were reminded that they reserved the right to refuse participation in the study or any portion that followed.

Management of data.

My research supervisor and I are the only people who have access to the data. This data including recorded interviews, documents, transcripts and reflective notes has been stored in a locked cabinet in the supervisor's office. All data rendered into results has been presented without the use of names so as to mask the true identities of

participants. All participants have been offered the opportunity to review their interview transcript.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the results of this study. The process of data analysis was thoroughly outlined in the methods chapter and thus will not be repeated here. In addition, the ordering and structure of this chapter has been explained in the methodology chapter.

Specifically, the reader will gain insight into the study results through a descriptive framework of three sections, framed as questions. First, I present "What Is the Change?" by introducing participants' understandings of EXED and their perspectives on its evolution in Yukon schools. This is followed by an exploration of "Why is EXED at the Centre of the Change?" detailing participants' opinions on the suitability of EXED for Yukon schools. The final section, entitled "What Factors are Affecting the Change?" will offer participants' views of the factors that currently are challenging and those that are supporting the use of EXED in Yukon schools. The main findings are presented with specific quotations and paraphrases from study participants and relevant documents. Pseudonyms have not been attached to participants due to the relatively small size (approximately 200 teachers) and social nature of the YDE. In other words, some teachers may know most other teachers in the Whitehorse area. Some of the examples given by participants may serve as points from which the identities of participants could be speculated. By not including pseudonyms, readers will not be able to link together the various responses of one single participant, thus maintaining that participant's anonymity. Also, I generally follow a template for presenting the results that presents the data in the order of YDE staff members, then principals followed by teachers.

What Is the Change? - Understandings and Evolution of the Use of EXED in Yukon Schools

The results of this section were founded mainly upon the research questions: "What are the understandings and definitions of experiential education?" and "What are the driving forces behind the implementation of EXED?" This segment will first report on participants' personal definitions and understandings of EXED and on their perceptions of YDE's definitions of EXED. Next, data regarding the driving forces behind EXED's development within Yukon schools is offered. Data from document analysis has been integrated into each section.

Definitions and understandings of Experiential Education.

During one of my initial queries, I was curious to find out more about the language that participants wanted to use in our conversation surrounding this topic. I have coded the responses based on the terminology that the respondents chose for the interview whether it is EXED, EL or other. I also inquired about the language and the definition provided by the YDE and coded this data as either unknown or similar to or different from the personal definition. In essence, I wanted to find out if there was consistency in the language used throughout this case. As a total group, four respondents chose EXED, one chose EL and two chose to use other terms. Throughout the analyzed documents, the YDE used EXED and EL interchangeably as their chosen terms. In the following, I present these findings by sub-grouping.

Two YDE staff members used the word "EXED" in their interviews. The first respondent spoke both of his own definition and of the YDE's definition in saying that EXED includes hands-on learning in a variety of forms. He pointed out that while he

believes that outdoor education is a part of EXED, many of the staff including teachers and principals have the impression that outdoor education is synonymous with EXED. This is in part due to the fact that the majority of EXED programming in Yukon schools has, over the past thirty years, been offered in outdoor settings. The definition provided in YDE annual reports has evolved over a ten-year period. The definition in the 2000-2001 annual report states that EXED/ EL is, "programs in which 'real experiences' in science and the arts- as examples- are used to enhance the teaching of concepts...integrates hands-on experience with the learning process" (Government of Yukon, 2001, p. 10).

Another YDE staff member went into much greater detail in his definition of EXED. He explained:

> People learn in many different ways, and the way we've used experiential is a reference to a diversification of our learning and instructional value systems, so that much of it is tactile, its not just sit and listen, much of its inquiry, much of its responding to a community need with no clear sense of how I solve a problem but a problem that faces a community, much of its involved in enterprises and challenges, and the challenges aren't necessarily going to be physical challenges, but they can also be social, emotional, community challenges.

This respondent also suggested that in the Yukon the general impression of EXED is that its focus is solely on outdoor pursuits. However, he explained that when he is in a teaching or mentorship role in an outdoor education setting, such as, "paddling, you can be damn sure I'm doing stuff on river quality and I'm doing stuff on river dynamics I'm doing a whole pile of stuff." He also pointed out that the definition of EXED changes

depending upon whom you talk to in the YDE. He thought of one person who would define it using an OE model and another person who would define it in a similar way to his own definition. An addition was made in 2006 to the definition to reflect more of an out-of-the-classroom focus. The addition states EXED/EL "includes practical, hands-on experience in the learning process, whether in the classroom, school yard or at study sites further away with overnight camping or, national and international travel" (Government of Yukon, 2006, p. 24).

One of the principals used EXED throughout the interview to refer to the topic. In attempting to define EXED, he described:

> The distinction between outdoor education and experiential education is really important to understand that the one can encompass the other, like the outdoor education can be a component of experiential education depending on how its set up, and this school has always had a tradition of a lot of outdoor education.

He goes on to say that more recently, the school has tried to move more toward delivering curriculum through in-class hands-on experiences as well as outdoor experiences. In addition, this respondent stated that the YDE does not provide a definition or an explanation of what EXED is for its schools and that it is often the job of the school to develop their own understanding.

The other principal also used EXED in his reference to the topic. His brief definition was about recognizing the:

> Way we teach within the classroom and making it meaningful and engaging the students and so the whole process for me around experiential education is an idea that you connect the dots and there's a connection to what you're learning instead

> of the person learning it and not having the experience to keep it with them and to make it meaningful. So, to me its both indoor and outdoor education.

He did not know if a definition existed at the YDE level and he suggested that he was unaware because he had only been at that particular school for one year.

One respondent used the term Experiential Learning (EL) throughout the interview. Again, a very brief and general definition was given by her. When asked for her definition, this teacher stated that EL is, "whatever you can come up with, kind of depends on who you're working with and how you're working". Interestingly enough, this teacher later commented on how important it was to her planning that she be mindful of having purpose and intention in her hands-on programming as she was aware that action alone was not educative. She also indicated she was unaware of the YDE's understanding of EL simply because she had never been provided with any EL specific resources.

The remaining two respondents chose other terms to refer to the topic of discussion. The third YDE staff member stated he tends toward a, "preference with outdoor experiential although its not outdoor all the time". His understanding tends:

> To be land based although there's a reflection process in there that runs through classroom setting and other material but uhh I often looked at my definition and even my understanding of experiential that was something that was anticipated and what you did to anticipate that depending on your role and what actually happened on site and the experience and the reflection side, so much more circular pattern.....there was a reflected period or a going away but an anticipation element going forward into another experience for something different or how to

> make connections with what had gone before and what you understood from processing what might be or what are called the learning outcomes of different course content.

He also felt the YDE's definition was similar in that part of the focus for this type of programming has more recently tried to include issues of environmental awareness and ecological literacy which are well suited to outdoor-focused programming.

Finally, in 2009, the YDE made another addition to its definition as indicated within annual reports. The 2008-2009 report states that, EXED/EL "is student centered and may integrate curricula across courses, depending on the setting and the intended learning outcomes" (Government of Yukon, 2009, p. 30). The remaining teacher chose the term "integrated studies program" in our discussion. It should be noted that this respondent teaches in a program that offers a cohort of students a number of courses combined into one semester. He says that:

> Its not outdoor education exclusively.....There's retro connectives and reinforcements and lessons taught and quizzes done in the outside, but I'm not out there trying to teach the entire unit of electricity outside, we reinforce it with things.....So, yes they are an experiential learning, they are experiential education, but I think the integrated studies term avoids parents thinking that its all being done outside and then they wonder why you're giving their kids quizzes in the classroom and why they write finals.

When asked about the YDE's definition, he commented that, "I've never been told what exactly I'm supposed to do" and that the YDE often defers to teachers who have experience and authority in the area.

Driving forces behind Experiential Education implementation.

The driving forces behind educational change range from teachers to community members to government agencies. For the purposes of describing this case, bottom-up change is synonymous with teacher/ school/ community-driven change while top-down change is synonymous with YDE-driven change. This section describes how the respondents view the driving forces behind the development of EXED in Yukon schools, historically, currently and for the future. Figure 5 shows a conceptual graphic that I created, as an illustrative summary of participant reports, to represent the driving forces particular to this case. In short, what they believed had started out as a mostly bottom-up driven initiative has slowly crept toward the middle of the spectrum into the realm of combined efforts. While the current position on the spectrum appears to still be somewhat to the bottom-up side of the centre marker, some participants have suggested that the future would show a centre position or even further toward the top-down end of the spectrum.

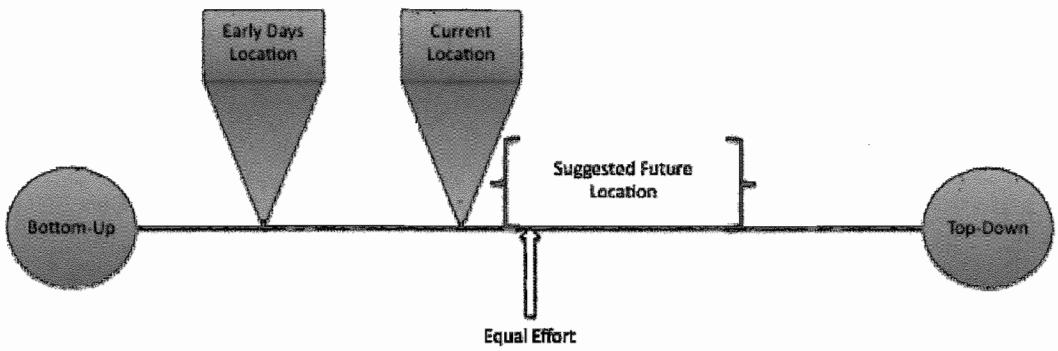

Figure 5. Experiential Education change spectrum.

To explore this topic, I presented two separate queries to participants. The first was: "Often, changes like these are driven from the 'top down', from the 'bottom up', or

a combination of both: Can you describe how currently EXED programming in Yukon schools fits into this idea? Where would you locate the driving force if you pictured the change on a spectrum with bottom-up on one end and top-down on the other?" All seven respondents cited bottom-up as the primary driving force in eleven quotations. All participants also referenced YDE supports (top-down) as a secondary driving force. This data was supported by document analysis that showed that the YDE was supporting bottom-up initiatives in a number of ways as previously explicated in the literature review. Three of the respondents knew enough about Yukon education to be able to provide historical perspectives on the query as well. In addition, three respondents took it upon themselves to suggest how they thought future initiatives should proceed with respect to the same concept.

One of the YDE staff members explained that in his review of historical documents, he found that, "it was a very bottom-up, very much teacher-driven, community-driven and First Nations driven". Today, he said, the situation is much the same although the YDE has realized the improvements in student achievement and engagement and is now working with schools to provide support such as extra funding. He added that right now the bottom-up focused approach is moving to more of a "meeting in the middle" and this philosophy should continue into the future development of EXED in Yukon schools. Specifically, the YDE should serve a few different functions such as continuing to support schools in the development of their new programs by providing necessary supports, reaching out to the "more quiet" teachers who may welcome an introduction to EXED, working with the Yukon Teachers Association in developing new EXED curricula and simply listening to what teachers and principals are

requesting of the YDE. He pointed out that it will be important for the whole system to recognize the actual local desires, whether they be those of students or of the community, in developing programs.

Another staff member had a contrasting opinion on the historical perspective. His thoughts were that:

> Prior to that, in nineteen-eighty-nine when we developed the ACES program, it came from the top down, actually from the minister of education in the government level, saying that, here's what we want to have happen, how can you do it, and administrators sort of wandered around and said well I can't do it, and finally picked up on somebody in the system that could help it move through and move down to teachers, to other leaders at the community level, at the classroom level.

He was in agreement that the latest evolution has tended to be from the bottom-up with some assistance from the YDE. A third staff member explained that the development of EXED in Yukon schools to where it is today is a reflection of primarily the efforts of dozens of teachers who have long since retired and of teachers who are still in the classroom.

Both principals agreed that aside from the development of the Wood Street programs, the efforts are generally coming from the bottom-up. One of the principals described his experience with trying to introduce EXED programming as follows:

> We certainly get support, but its almost as if the schools have to develop the ideas and go to the department, just the reverse of what you might think. Go to the department and say I want to do [an outdoor education trip], which is the example

> I'll throw out at you because we started it ten years ago, what do you think, can we do it, and of course the department lined up behind us and supported it, but it was developed in the school, but there was very little coming the other way, coming from the department, at this point with curriculum development for example, we're just beginning, I think they're just beginning to dabble in it over there as well

He also spoke of a system wide acceptance of EXED that has come about in a timely manner. He suggested that as a broader community of educators "we" are all coming to understand and accept that not all kids learn by "sitting and listening or copying" and that "we've finally reached a consensus now enough to [implement EXED philosophy]".

One of the teachers spoke about how the programming for two of the very first Wood Street School courses were developed from the ground-up back in the mid nineteen-eighties. He explained that the attitude was:

> Lets see what works and lets have fun doing it, I mean [Peter] used to take his kids dog sledding and caribou hunting on the Dempster [highway], that's full on, there's a story of [Carl] having such a limited budget on one of his first ES (Experiential Science) trips that he was serving the kids pizzas cut into, each piece sliced three times for three meals a day. So, it was very much ground-up, lets figure this out, and then there were programs that didn't work, the origins of one program was called *vision quest* and it was for kids that are not fitting into the cracks in school, lets force them to go into the outdoors and they had kids drinking methyl hydrate and throwing food in the water and beating each other up, and having to be put in to restraining holds and no one was telling them what

> to do, and what not to do so they tried it and didn't work well, that died, and if it worked, oh we survived that one, lets do that different next time, so now there's more positive models to build off of.

He and the other teacher-respondent agreed that, currently, the efforts are still mostly from the bottom-up. In contrast to the mixed methods approach suggested by other respondents, the first teacher speculated that, "the new programs that show up, unless they're totally unique and innovative, if they're similar and related to what exists, are going to be top-down, go learn from this guy, have fun, rather than we want you to do a whatever program, figure it out, hopefully it works". He believed that the public's heightened aversion to risk would force the YDE to step in to a more prescriptive role at least in regards to EXED programming that happens out of the classroom.

The second teacher reflected on the first time she witnessed another teacher using EXED methodologies in the classroom. She explained that she didn't know what the other teacher was doing until the other teacher offered to take one of the respondents' students for a project and she learned through observing that process. That was her first exposure to the idea that you could teach young people using experiential methods in school. Now that she offers EXED programming in her classes, she's had to figure out how to employ the methodology by trial and error. She suggested that more efforts should come from the YDE in the future but warned that the YDE needs to honor what the teachers and their schools have already accomplished. The attitude of teamwork, she said, should be, "wow, this is working great, how can we help and how can we make it grow" rather than a full takeover of responsibilities.

Why is EXED at the Centre of the Change? - Suitability of EXED for Yukon K-12 Schools

Interview participants were queried directly on the topic of "suitability of EXED for Yukon schools" via the question, "what factors make EXED suitable for Yukon schools?" A category entitled "EXED SUITABILITY FACTORS" was created within which three codes were contained and which also housed eighteen references to the category. The three codes consisted of "External Resources/ Opportunities", "First Nations Influence" and "Northern Community Predisposition". The data related to these three codes will be presented in the following section. Figure 6 represents the three aforementioned EXED suitability factors. Note that the first number in brackets attached to each code represents the total number of quotations associated with the specific code. This is also known as the frequency of occurrence.

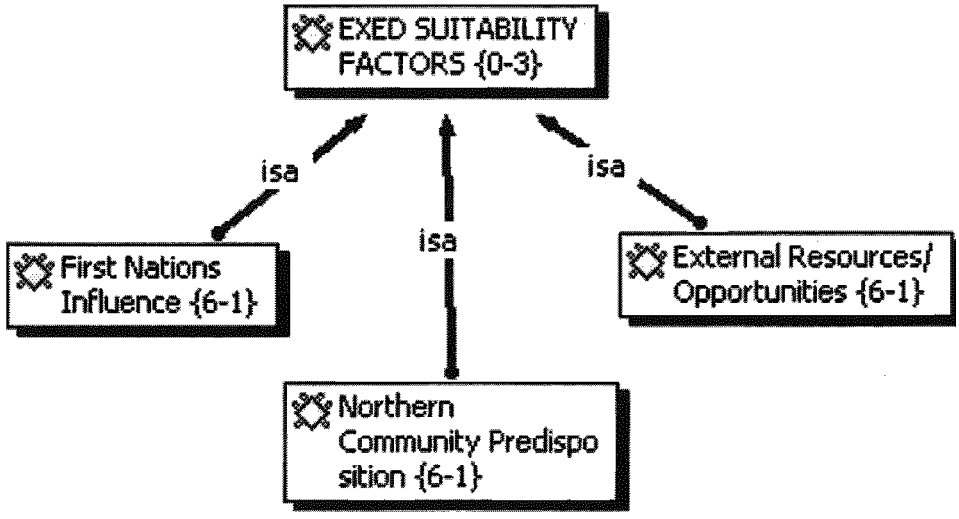

Figure 6. Experiential Education suitability factors.

External resources/ opportunities.

Five people made six references to external resources and opportunities as factors that made EXED suitable for use in Yukon schools. Of the respondents, two were YDE staff members, two were principals and one was a teacher.

All but one person spoke of the availability of land based or geographical resources and opportunities. A YDE staff member stated that:

> I think a lot of our communities are so close to pristine wilderness areas, a school in downtown Vancouver has a hard time getting to a cross country ski hill or trails and here it's ten minutes out of town or some of our rural communities, Old Crow, Carcross, can snowshoe right out the backdoor. There's so many things that are possible here that are not possible other places.

Another YDE staff member reflected on the proximity to sites useful for outdoor experiential programming. He maintained that, "we're also close enough to wildlife populations and to wonderful areas to canoe in and to ski in, we have wonderful local facilities also for physical activity, outdoor physical activity, and wonderful nearby, if you want to call them, facilities, could be the Skagway summit area, which is not too far away".

One of the principals suggested that his background in geology made it easy for him to realize the potential for hands-on learning opportunities that existed simply by stepping outside of the school. He commented that:

> In the Yukon, when it comes to the outdoors you got the best laboratory in the world and it bothers me sometimes when I know that we don't offer geology at school, we don't offer earth science at the school and you know we offer the

> chemistry and the physics and the biology but here we are in the greatest place on the earth for that kind of thing and if you can encourage that and if teachers can use that, you don't need a three hundred thousand dollar lab.

One of the teachers shed light on a slightly different type of external resource. He explained that, through community connections, he has access to a number of different facility-based resources. He said:

> You know in the Yukon we're a bit spoiled, its kind of like a mom and pop operation in some ways, we have small numbers, lots of people know lots of other people and there's lots of networking, so for instance, just in this class, if I want access to the Faro mine site with the kids to teach them about open pit mining and acid rock drainage, one of the kids in my class, his dad's the manager so he undoes the lock.

First Nations influence.

For this emergent theme, four out of seven respondents made reference to the influence of the Yukon's First Nations culture as a factor that contributed to the suitability of EXED for Yukon Schools. One respondent offered a different, contrary perspective from the other four. Of the five respondents, and the six responses that were gathered, two were YDE staff members, one was a principal and two were teachers.

In general, participants referred to the long history of First Nations people in the Territory and to their traditional method and philosophy of teaching and learning. One of the YDE staff members asserted, "I think the students, a large percentage of our students are First Nations, I think a lot of them, their family backgrounds include hunting, fishing, cultural camps, on the land, food gathering type activities, cultural activities..."

A different YDE staff member said, "I definitely think that experiential education is becoming a much more broadly understood and uhh used, if I can use it that way, methodology for teaching and I think to some extent it has its roots in the advocacy of training teachers in the Yukon from a First Nation background."

Its not that you can't do these sorts of things in downtown Toronto, explained one of the principals, its just that there's really a legitimacy here for the use of EXED given the cultural history. He explains:

> We have a First Nations base here which is very very strong and so much of First Nations education, traditional education was, well it was all, hand-on, you simply learned by doing, so you look at a school like this where half the kids are from a First Nations background, this is how their, especially their, grandparents went to school, and that's only two generation ago, and its right there, they can still talk to their grandparents about living in the trap line and learning all sorts of very sophisticated survival skills without picking up a pen, without looking at a chalkboard, without listening to a teacher, by simply watching their uncle, in the case of many boys, running a trap line or whatever, tanning a moose hide and so on. So, to me this area with its history, its traditions and its accessibility to the outdoors is absolutely ideal, it's ideal for experiential education.

In agreement, one of the teachers said that:

> For me its like, First Nation way of teaching, it has a lot to do with how we traditionally teach our children, and trying to build more into that because you want to teach them to be successful you know, you've taken the students out of the bush where the sticks and stones are the toys, any kid's toy, my kid at home

> would rather play with a stick than toys I buy him downtown, and then you take them and you put them in four walls and tell them to sit down, don't move and listen. It goes against everything you just taught them for the first five years of their life, to run and play and laugh and be free, so then its like OK I don't get it, so its about being able to kind of give them that same sort of teaching and balance...

Before explaining the reasons that he felt that EXED is suitable for use in Yukon schools, one of the teachers offered this contradictory opinion:

> I don't think it has to do with the higher First Nation population up here, I don't think that's the case because [we had very little EXED programming] where I went to school near Victoria, there were tons of First Nation kids, there was oodles and oodles, so I don't think that is where I'd point my finger at for why we have more keenness up here for that.

Northern community predisposition.

The influence of the First Nations culture seemed to only capture a specific part of a broader cultural influence. This emergent theme (Northern Community Predisposition) represents the rest of that cultural influence that describes Yukon's non-First Nations peoples' alignment with ways of life that include, to a significant degree, hands-on experiences in the outdoors, whether for work or for recreation. A number of people also hinted at the broader acceptance of perceived risks associated with outdoor pursuits for themselves and/ or for their children than may exist in other places. More in-depth results on risk perceptions will be presented in the "Supports and Challenges" section.

Four participants made a total of six references to this theme. A YDE staff member commented that many students are raised in families who partake in hunting, fishing or recreating in the outdoors. He suggested that:

> The Yukon seems like a very active population, like lots of, like people aren't engaged in everything, but everyone is engaged in some aspects of it, camping, fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, skiing, you know snowshoeing, dog sledding, you know whatever, everyone's got something that they're doing, and to me I see that really plays out into the interests of the student and I think that if we can capitalize on that, you know the winter camping, you know the sort of First Nations cultural camps and those sort of things, it's a no-brainer for us to say wow, and I think that's probably what everyone's thinking you know way back in the beginning, was like this is kind of what we should do, we should be doing on the land activities, we should be doing experiential education things, its just the way our population is aligned.

Part of moving to the Yukon, as one of the principals suggested, is about embracing the "spirit of adventure" and "the spirit of enjoying what you look at out the window". This mindset, he suggested, contributes to the acceptance of EXED programming in Yukon schools and, ultimately, to its suitability for use. In agreement, a teacher reported that:

> We harvested a moose on the Pelly river this fall and parents had no problem, they actually took the meat home and we had a potluck for parent teacher interviews, and I told that to my brother in law in [another jurisdiction] and he laughs and said if we killed something on one of our science trips, he's a science

teacher, he said I'd lose my job, they wouldn't cook it up and eat it, they'd have my throat.

What Factors are Affecting the Change? - Challenges and Supports to EXED Implementation in Yukon Schools

This section presents a rather large number of codes. In total, 30 different codes were identified. This points to the fact that experiences related to this topic are varied. In some cases, only one reference was made yet I created a code because what was said held significant relevance. These single-referenced codes will be grouped together under the sections entitled "other". I have structured the presentation in a way that allows for data to be grouped according to respondents' job titles. I have done this so that responses with a high frequency and those with a low frequency, according to respondent grouping, can be highlighted. Before presenting the segmented results, I offer the results of all groups combined.

I present the "Challenges" section first and follow that with the "Supports" section. Finally, in order to explore the research question, "How is the change process affected by the supporting and limiting factors", I have included anecdotal examples of how specific supports and limitations have affected the experiences of respondents.

Challenges to Experiential Education implementation.

This section will present the data in reference to participants' perceived challenges to the implementation of EXED. I posed the following questions: "Within the current state of EXED programming, are there challenges that exist for those who are implementing or who may wish to implement EXED programming?", "What are those challenges?", and "Can you describe any examples of how you/ teachers/ principals have

been challenged/ limited in attempts to implement EXED programming?" In total, the seven respondents offered 68 responses. I grouped the responses into 16 different codes. Figure 7 offers a "network view" of the codes and their related frequencies. Note, again, that the most oft-cited codes are on the left side and the lesser-cited codes are on the right.

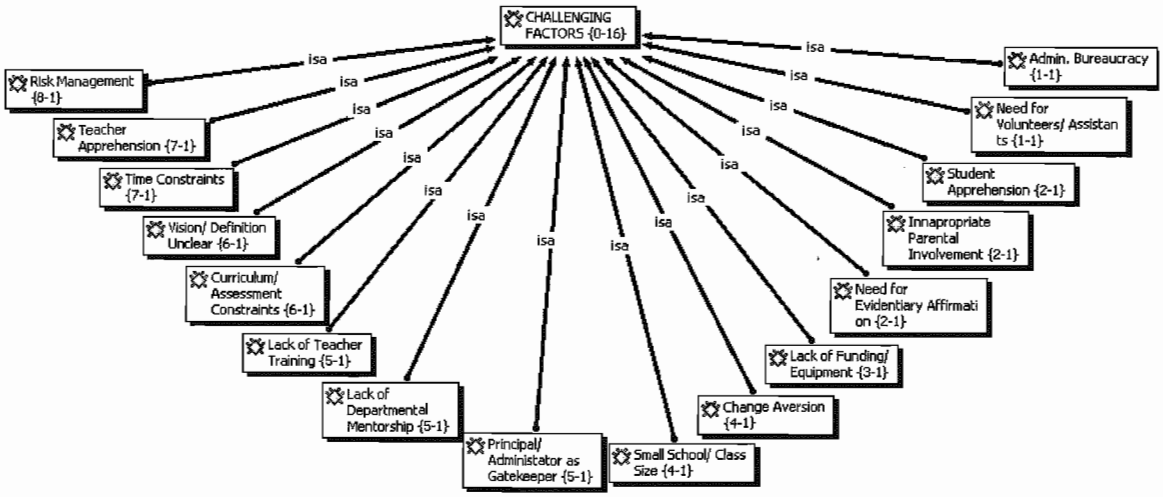

Figure 7. Challenges to Experiential Education implementation.

I believe that a more revelatory method for conceptualizing these specific results is to begin by asking the question, "how many respondents are represented within each of the codes?" In presenting the data in this way, I am able to show which codes were actually cited by the greatest or the least number of people, thus, establishing their importance. As a group, there was no code to which all respondents referred. However, six respondents cited "time constraints" and five people referred to "lack of teacher training" and "risk management" as challenges. Next in importance, four people cited "curriculum/ assessment constraint"', "principal/ administrator as gatekeeper" and "teacher apprehension" as challenges. Those codes cited by only one person were

"administrative bureaucracy", "need for volunteers" and "student apprehension". In what follows, I present more detailed results for this section by respondent group so as to highlight the uniqueness of their responses. Specifically, I offer detailed reports of the six most frequently cited codes and present the codes according to respondent groups. The rest of the codes are then presented with less detail than the six most significant codes.

YDE staff members.

All three YDE staff members mentioned "principal/ administrator as gatekeeper". One staff member spoke of how principals are often not versed in what might be possible in using EXED in their schools and may be weary of allowing its use. He also stated that:

> I think that for the most part they control the funding, they control approvals, they are the go-betweens between the department and sort of promoting our philosophy, and often experiential education requires a considerable amount of work, organization, time commitment, there's also you know some perceived risk for outdoor education trips that often principals are not comfortable with.

Another staff member agreed that principals sometimes see outdoor education as too risky and even if the necessary supports are in place, such as funding, equipment, expertise, etc., the principal may bring the process to a halt. An example was cited by a third staff member who shared a story of a principal disallowing an EXED based cohort program because he thought that it would be too popular and would take students away from the regular non-cohort classes.

All three staff members also mentioned "risk management". A staff member explained, previous accidents in outdoor education, such as the Strathcona-Tweedsmuir avalanche accident, have "really caused us to step back and say what are we doing as far as experiential education/ outdoor education in our schools". The same staff member stated that a lot of teachers are shunning those kinds of trips because of the perceived liability and the "amount of steps that we now require them to go through to take a canoe trip out". Another staff member agreed in saying that a lot of teachers find that the YDE's field trip policy is too restrictive. The third staff member also suggested that due to other schools having to shut down their outdoor education programs, Yukon schools have had to become much more diligent and cautious as an attempt at following the industry standard.

Two staff members alluded to "time constraints" as a challenge. One staff member said that it takes a lot of work to organize EXED programming and "I think teachers are so busy with so many things, across the curriculum, a variety of student needs, you know all those things, often that is really difficult for them". The other staff member agreed in saying that the regular pressures put on teachers are a "pretty major demand" already and that a lot of extra energy is required to take another approach.

Two staff members spoke of "teacher apprehension" as a challenge. When one teacher leaves a rural school in the Yukon, the new teacher that comes in may not want to continue with the existing winter snowshoeing program simply because they don't have a background in EXED, explained a staff member. Another staff member explained:

> I know many teachers that are in the business here and they've done very little science and feel apprehensive about science and don't see how its an inquiry thing

> and geeze they want a text book, and actually want to give the kids a bunch of stuff to say; just explore the possibilities, we've left kindergarten behind by the time we're in grade three and the exploring process is left behind and that's a big fight for teachers that want to keep control.

He commented that a teacher may also feel apprehensive simply because they may not be able-bodied enough to partake in the activities that may accompany an EXED program. In addition, he suggested that some teachers feel apprehensive because they feel as though their colleagues don't want to see them succeed simply because the new program is different from the usual course of things. This can lead to a feeling of being distanced from colleagues.

Two staff members mentioned "lack of teacher training" as a challenge. One of the staff members stated:

> I see that often teachers are not exactly sure what experiential education is and what it could be, and how might I do these things in my classroom. I find that part, has lead me to that, that we need to be able to provide a lot more training and hands on experience for teachers to know.

He also thought that pre-service training needs to include an introduction to EXED for teachers and principals while in teacher's college.

One staff member suggested that some teachers find "curriculum/ assessment constraints" to be a challenge. He explained that there's a "tendency for some teachers to say 'no' [to EXED], you just crowd it together, stay it, don't go outdoors, don't do anything physical, spend more time studying, more homework, more time in the classroom" because there are standardized tests for which students need to be prepared

and traditional education practices are seen as the only way to prepare students for them. He alluded to the fact EXED often sacrifices breadth of learning for depth.

Principals.

Both principals referenced "time constraints" as a challenge to implementing EXED in their school. One principal stated that:

> The average teacher seems overwhelmed, I'm not saying they are overwhelmed, but they seem overwhelmed, and a lot of them are, there's so much to be done every day, and to approach a teacher and say look, you can take your, lets use science, your science for this term and you can base it on an experiential model, the teacher might agree with you intellectually, but the effort it requires to transform the classroom approach to say an outdoor approach is huge and unless they have all sorts of direction and resources and encouragement, it probably isn't going to happen, except with the most motivated ones.

He went on to say that most of the work needs to be done with the large group of people in the middle who are saying that, "it sounds like a good idea, I can see why it would work, but how do we do it". The other principal suggested that there is not enough time for collaboration between teachers as would be necessary to develop other ways to achieve course outcomes.

The two principals also cited "curriculum/ assessment constraints" as a challenge. There is pressure from the YDE for schools to be able to adhere to BC performance standards and, as one principal said:

> If you read them over, they're not really based on experience at all, they're based on tried and true, this is what you learn in grade three and this is what you learn in

> grade four and to translate that, those performance standards into an experiential situation I think would be not only difficult, but also, there would have to be a lot of education out there for the parents and other people to try to understand what it is you're trying to do.

The other principal echoed the sentiment in explaining that his teachers have a hard enough time trying to cover myriad learning outcomes prescribed by British Columbia.

Only one of the principals mentioned "lack of teacher training" as a challenge. Quite simply, he said that he has not been involved in any EXED training nor have his teachers to his knowledge. Neither of the principals addressed "principal/ administrator as gatekeeper" as a challenge. One of the principals did describe "risk management" as a challenge. He suggested that he is ultimately the one responsible for the safety of the students because he gives the final approval for activities that involve risk. He explained that it will be a challenge to be careful of expanding EXED programs too quickly in Yukon schools as he cautioned that safety standards and practices will have to develop in synchronization with new programs. One of the principals cited "teacher apprehension" as a challenge he has experienced. He explained that getting to teachers to "buy-in" to EXED is critical. He said, "one of the challenges is to move the teachers who either don't have the self-confidence or the expertise or even the motivation to want to move away from a traditional approach and teach the kids more experientially, that's the challenge".

Teachers.

Both teachers cited "lack of teacher training" as a challenge to the implementation of EXED in Yukon schools. One of the teachers expressed a desire for

more training in developing curriculum and delivering EXED programming. The other teacher, a member of the local outdoor educators association, stated some frustration with how much time he was needing to commit to organizing teacher training programs such as avalanche awareness or canoeing courses. He agreed that teachers need more training if they are to offer outdoor education-based programming but he felt that it should be the YDE taking responsibility for the organizing portion of the process. He offered:

> Why am I doing it on my free time, why am I volunteering, shouldn't there be a paid position at the department and somebody paid a normal salary to do this, why am I meeting there when I'm supposed to be doing other things including coaching other kids, I really wish the department of education had a paid position of someone who's whole job was the organization of these things, the training, of all the little subtleties and the quagmire of all the paperwork involved with it, negotiating the jumble and made things easy for teachers to get the training.

The two teachers also referred to "time constraints" as a challenge they've experienced. They both expressed a general frustration with how much extra time is required to plan for using EXED as a teaching and learning strategy. One of the teachers said, "teachers already now feel that they're bogged down and we already do so much, now you want us to do this [EXED], you know, its like OK how am I going to do this plus teach them how to read and write".

One of the teachers referred to "curriculum/ assessment constraints" as a challenge. She said that teachers "really get hung up on the curriculum" and that a teacher needs to be innovative in order to try new methods. The same teacher cited

"teacher apprehension" as a challenge. The other teacher referenced "principal/ administrator as gatekeeper" as a challenge. He reflected on an experience and said:

> I have had an administrator in the past when my career was young who was not an enabler, he was a limiter and it was brutal, if I was in this position with that administrator, I wouldn't do this job, everything was complicated, everything was second guessed and micro-managed so I think it pays off to find the best candidates and trust them and let them do their job.

He said that offering new programming is really difficult with an administrator who isn't willing to give their full support. The same teacher also mentioned "risk management" as a challenging factor. He stated:

> Its way safer to teach kids pencil and paper and origami in the classroom, but when you start integrating experiences of any kind, out of school or in-class activity, there's liability and there's risk management and that's really important and I don't think people take it seriously enough, they just hope it doesn't happen to them, I think it needs to be taken much more seriously, especially when you involve things like moving water, cold, mechanized transportation, driving kids on icy roads to long distance events, these are serious things.

Other challenges.

There are ten other challenges that were described by the respondents. I will expand upon some of the more oft-cited codes and will list the rest. One respondent from each of the three groups referred to "vision/ definition unclear" as a challenging factor. One of the YDE staff members explained that sometimes when schools apply for the

EXED funding that is allotted to each school they are applying for projects that do not actually have an EXED focus. For example, he says:

> Often we have teachers request money to go to the art centre and see a theatrical play and we're saying that's not really experiential education it's an art based program but should the students decide to do a workshop in acting that would be more in line with what we're doing.

Thus, he explained, a lot of work needs to go into coming up with a standard definition. He also said that the YDE faces the challenge of not knowing if schools want EXED to be mandated or if they should just provide an overall philosophy and a network of supports. One of the principals offered, "there's no consensus there, on the part of any of us, as to the efficacy of experiential education except in the most general sense... its great and everybody thinks its wonderful, we're not sure what it is, and we're not sure whether we want to do it across the system or even across a whole school".

In another instance, one respondent from each group cited "lack of departmental mentorship" as a challenge. The staff member explained that while some mentorship is currently available, there is not enough to reach all teachers wanting to offer EXED programming. The principal agreed with this sentiment in recognizing the efforts of the current mentor, but that more was needed to help teachers to develop their own curriculum. The teacher also agreed and expressed a desire for mentorship on planning outdoor education-based field trips. She also would like to see the mentors spending a few days in her class to help her better conceptualize EXED methodology.

Two participants mentioned "small school/ class size" as a challenging factor. A YDE staff member mentioned as staffing changes happen in small rural schools there is

no guarantee that the new staff member will have an EXED background to be able to take over the EXED program from a retiring staff member. According to this participant, in more populated schools there is at least a better chance of the program shifting to an available teacher who is willing and able to take it over. One of the teachers offered an example of this challenge that occurred at a school in Haines Junction. He explained that the school poured money into their EXED-based program but that it has been shut down for the time being simply because there were not enough students interested. It's challenging, he explained, to offer a specialized program when your pool of potential participants is no larger than ten and you need five to run the program. He said that the students may simply be more interested in other courses on the day of sign up and the four that do want to take the EXED program are out of luck.

A principal and a teacher addressed the "need for evidentiary affirmation" as a challenge. In essence, they said that without data showing its effectiveness in their schools it is difficult to impress upon others in their school that EXED is a worthy teaching and learning philosophy. A different principal and the same teacher cited "lack of funding" as a challenge they've experienced. A principal and a teacher referenced "inappropriate parental involvement" as a challenge. They both have had experiences in which parents volunteering on a field trip have not acted in the best interests of their children and have impeded the learning process for the group. In another instance, a principal and a teacher mentioned "change aversion" as a challenge. The respondents referred to parents' or other community members' aversion to EXED being introduced into the classroom. Parents and community members sometimes felt like their children were part of an experiment and they were not comfortable with this feeling. A lone YDE

staff member mentioned "administrative bureaucracy" as a challenge faced by schools. A different staff member explained that more recently schools were experiencing a "need for volunteers/ assistants" for their EXED activities. Finally, one teacher explained that "student apprehension" exists, specifically with field studies-based EXED programming as not all student want to be away from their school on a regular basis.

Supports to Experiential Education implementation.

In the same fashion as used above, I present the data that relates to those factors that support the implementation of EXED in Yukon K-12 schools as expressed by the participants of this study. I began this query by asking participants, "How is the YDE facilitating the implementation of EXED in K-12 schools?" I followed this by asking, "What other factors are supporting the implementation of EXED?" In total, participants offered 54 responses to these two questions. I then grouped the responses into two sub-categories that, when combined, contained ten codes. The 32 responses that referred to how the YDE is supporting the use of EXED were grouped into one of six different themes under the "YDE facilitation tools" sub-category. The rest of the responses contained references to non-YDE controlled supports and were placed within the broader category of "supporting factors". This grouping contained four unique codes and 22 of the 54 quotations. Figure 8 offers a "network view" of the supports to EXED implementation in Yukon K-12 schools.

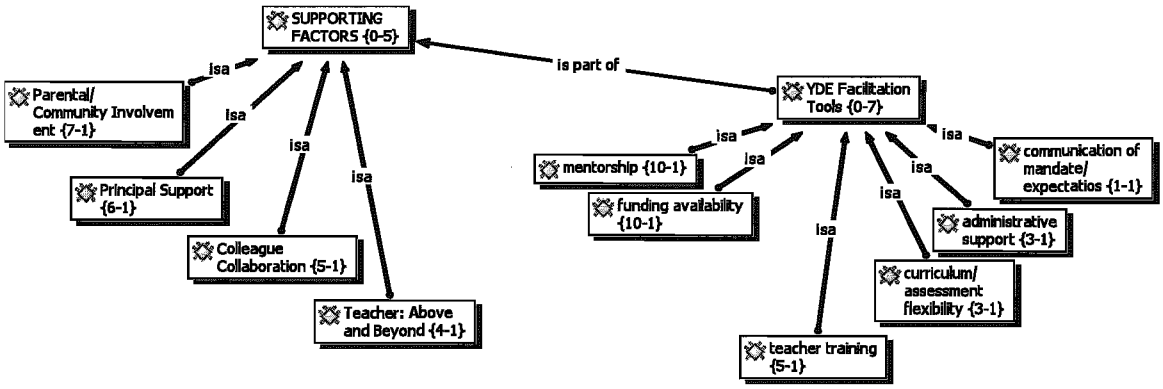

Figure 8. Supports to Experiential Education implementation.

None of the codes were referred to by all seven respondents. Six participants cited "funding availability" as a support provided by the YDE making this the most agreed upon code. Five participants referenced "mentorship" as a supporting factor and four referred to "parental/ community involvement". The least agreed upon code was "communication of mandate/ expectations". In the following, I present more detailed results for this section by respondent group so as to highlight the uniqueness of their responses. I offer detailed reports of the three most agreed-upon codes by respondent groups. I then address the rest of the codes as a large group.

YDE staff members.

All three YDE staff members described "funding availability" as an available support to the implementation of EXED. In listing off supports provided by the YDE, one staff member stated that the YDE gives:

> A considerable amount of funding over and above core funding, to experiential education, not sure of the number, it's upwards of half a million dollars, just to twenty eight schools to provide experiential education programming over and above what they normally would do.

He explained that over the years the YDE has allocated funds for the purchase of equipment useful for EXED programs such as canoes or Lego robotics. Another staff member mentioned the core funding that is allocated by the YDE. He said that:

> About two years ago the ministry gave a significant amount of money for experiential education opportunities and handed it basically to each school depending on the size and various things, without much definition of what it has to be used for, just said here Beaver Creek, you know, you use this however you define it, they had some guidelines, but not much.

The YDE has recently decided to allocate one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, he explained, to a project that aims to improve course content at the school in Old Crow. The goal is to include much more EXED programming as well as First Nations cultural programming. A third staff member reflected upon his experiences with the YDE and said that in the beginning of the EXED change process, twenty or thirty years ago, "we had no funding and we had to share all our gear". Now, he said, "this is so rich, its embarrassing...everybody's got their own stuff now, class set of MSR snowshoes, class set of whatever, fancy stuff".

All three staff members also mentioned "mentorship" as an available support that is provided by the YDE. One staff member explained that the YDE has two staff members that are employed as experiential education consultants. They are available as roving mentors and can be requested by schools to assist teachers with EXED programming. Another staff member mentioned that the mentors also join classes on field trips, particularly those with higher risk, to assist on many levels. Specifically, a mentor may provide "site analysis, hazard inventory, risk assessment". A third staff

member said that the mentors "work with teachers giving them ideas about how they can diversify their instructional practice, cover the curriculum and do so in ways that hit kids." A mentor will go to a class if a teacher requests assistance with presenting a portion of the curriculum using EXED methods. The staff member said that the mentor would usually facilitate the activity or project with both the teacher and students present so that the teacher has an opportunity to have an exemplary experience.

Two staff members cited "parental/ community involvement" as a supporting factor. In general, the respondents suggested, parents and community members have accepted the integration of EXED into Yukon schools. One staff member explained that, really all the parents I talk to realize that this is an important learning activity, and that their kids really do benefit from it". This acceptance, he added, allows schools to feel like their being supported in their EXED ventures. Another staff member gave details of one of the larger EXED projects that go on in a few of the schools in the Whitehorse area. He said that parents and community members support the annual Bison hunt that elementary schools participate in. A few of them volunteer to assist with the field trip portion of the project and a large number of people attend the community bison feast that happens in the gymnasiums of the schools to show support. He also added that the professional community adds a great deal to EXED programs. For example, the Yukon Department of Environment assists by offering a hunter education and environmental ethics course for the students involved in the hunt.

Principals.

One of the principals cited "mentorship" as a supporting factor. While other respondents highlighted the efforts of the YDE-provided mentors, this principal spoke of

an internal mentor. He explained that, within his school there exists a position in which a teacher is hired to act as a roving EXED facilitator. At the time of the interview, the person was hired to work as the EXED facilitator for half of the day and then to teach regular art classes for the other half. The principal explained that after a few years the school came up with the idea and received acceptance of their proposal from the YDE who now funds the position. He stated that the mission of the facilitator is to work with different teachers and their classes to show and explain the possibilities for using EXED methods in the classroom.

The same principal also provided details about the cultural fund and the experiential education fund, both of which can be used to support EXED-based programming. These funds, which have been available for five years now, are applied for and then allocated by the YDE to support various learning projects. He explained that while the funds are quite helpful, it doesn't take much time for the funds to be depleted for the year if every class wants to fund a project. Neither of the principals made references to "parental/ community involvement" as a supporting factor.

Teachers.

Both teachers cited "funding availability" as an available support. They indicated that funding is generally available for field trips, new equipment and trainings or workshops that teachers want to attend. One of the teachers, who is a member of the outdoor educators teachers association, said that when the association has organized trainings in the past the YDE has provided funding for, for example, a "wilderness first aid course, um in the past we've organized games and services, we've organized risk management workshops, we've organized facilitation for teachers to go abroad for things

like the national outdoor leadership school risk assessment seminars". He also commented:

> Every school has an experiential fund now, that's fantastic, they've tightened up how schools spend it, I like that a lot, because some schools were spending it in ways that, I won't get into specifics, but it seems ridiculous how they were allocating their experiential education funds, so its good that they're getting tighter with how they use that money and its good that they have that money, they should have even more.

The other teacher explained that funding is easy to obtain as long as she provides details in her application of how her class will use the EXED funding. She said she has used the fund to take students on trips for field studies and to purchase needed equipment, such as sewing machines, for specific learning activities.

One of the teachers mentioned that there are two YDE provided mentors available to support teachers. One of the mentors focuses more of his time as an assistant with the outdoor adventure components of the EXED programming, such as canoe or ski trips. In particular, he oversees many of the logistical details of field trips, such as preparing equipment and vehicles. The other mentor shares his time between assisting with in-class and out-of-class EXED programming.

The teacher-respondents also agreed in citing "parental/ community involvement" as a factor that supports the implementation of EXED in their classes. One of the classes harvested a moose on a canoe trip during the fall that was then brought home and shared as a potluck with parents during parent-teacher interviews. The teacher that shared this experience suggested that the community acceptance of certain EXED opportunities,

such as hunting, has been a factor that has supported his use of EXED programming. He also cited the support of the professional community in saying that "Community support has been fantastic, I can't thank people of the scientific community enough, whether it's dept of fisheries and oceans, dept of environment, like everybody has been fantastic and supportive which is great." These departments often provide his integrated studies program with guest speakers.

Other supports.

One person from each respondent group cited "administrative support" as a factor that supports the implementation of EXED. A principal explained that his administrators were vey helpful in creating a new position when his school needed extra support to facilitate their EXED programming. One of the teachers described:

> I'm just getting to know my current administrator, its my first year working for him, the last four years I was working for a gentleman named Kerry Hough who was all trust, he was great, especially when I was just starting out he was great and so good to work for, you know like he decided he liked me and he trusted me right off the bat and he let me go and there were very few things he didn't support me in, almost nothing actually, and he was fantastic to be able to build a program without a choke hold.

Two YDE staff members and a teacher asserted that "curriculum/ assessment flexibility" was a factor that supported EXED implementation. One of the YDE staff members explained that the some high school courses in the Yukon have an optional exam at the end of the term. The YDE has recently decided that if a student does not decide to take a final exam he or she then must be provided with an alternative form of

assessment. He went on to say:

> We still would like an assessment at the end of a course, but it could include a variety of things beyond just a test and we felt that it was important that it could include experiential education assessment rather than it has to be an exam or it has to be a test or something like that, so we felt that we really tried to align ourselves with the experiential education thinking that we had out there and allow that final assessment for that course, where they've chosen not to do the provincial exam could also be in line with experiential education. So, I think that's fundamentally a big move that we made where it sort of says you're free to have students do these kind of activities in the experiential education world that would be legitimately used for a final evaluation.

The staff member noted that the change was recently introduced and that, for now, teachers are coming up with their own models of EXED focused assessment. One of the other staff members gave details of assessment models that are used in some of the EXED programs in Yukon schools. He explained that authentic assessment is used to appraise a student's efforts during learning activities and that longitudinal analysis of test scores is used to gain an assessment of a student's intellectual development and growth.

Interestingly, two principals and one teacher cited "principal support". One principal described his role in the implementation process:

> Often the best and most creative ideas come from your staff and my job is to assess and to say OK I think we're going to run with this one, how do we do it. I do the trouble shooting with the department side and then become the intermediary. The other role I have is to try to act as a visionary with the staff and

> give them ideas about how we can deliver curriculum in say non-traditional ways, and we do that through staff meetings or internal workshops and so on, so two ends of the spectrum and then on the one hand, I'm there to receive ideas and to try to make them, turn them into reality and to support them, and the other hand I spend some of my time disseminating ideas to staff to see if, where they would germinate, every so often I come up with a plan for a project that I can take to the staff and say look why don't we try this, but often it comes the other way.

The other principal alluded to a couple of ways in which he supports his teacher of the EXED program in his school. First, he acts as a messenger between the teacher and the YDE in his efforts to promote the EXED program at his schools. In addition, he works to boost morale by showing that he is interested in each of the school's programs. For example, he sometimes joins the integrated studies class on their field trips to observe and take part in the EXED activity that they are doing. One of the teachers cited her principal's ability to build a culture of teamwork within the school that encourages teachers to together work on figuring out how to offer EXED programming in their classes.

One of the principals and two teachers suggested that "colleague collaboration" is a factor that supports the implementation of EXED. One of the principals said he encourages his teachers to get together in grade groups to discuss aspects of their teaching that are working and those that are not. He also suggests they discuss their individual curricula to try to develop some sort of continuity between them. One of the teachers explained that being part of the outdoor educators teachers association allows him to collaborate with other teachers. The other teacher enjoys team teaching with other

teachers, especially in regards to EXED programming, because she said it can be a struggle and it's helpful to be able to figure it out together. To do this, she said she simply joins her class with another and then shares the teaching role with a colleague.

All three YDE staff members referenced "teacher training" as a support, although no other respondent did. The staff members referred to the occasional workshops that teachers attend that are mostly on related to safety trainings or outdoor education.

Both of the teachers brought up the idea of performing their duties "above and beyond" what is expected of them based on their job descriptions. An increase in time commitment was the central focus of their comments. They both gave examples of how they regularly work beyond the 8 am-4 pm work day including volunteering their time on weekends. They suggested that the extra commitment is necessary for EXED-based programming within the current EXED-based classroom.

Finally, one teacher explained that the "communication of mandate/ expectations" was a supporting factor. He said he has a good understanding of what is expected of his integrated studies program and that this knowledge helps to guide the design of his curriculum.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to summarize the results of this study for the reader into a coherent and cohesive presentation of common categories and codes resulting from the coding and data analysis processes. It was my intent for the reader to gain insight into the study results through this descriptive three section framework. First, I presented "What Is the Change?" by introducing participants' understandings of EXED and their perspectives on its evolution in Yukon schools. This was followed by an

exploration of "Why is EXED at the Centre of the Change?" detailing participants' opinions on the importance and suitability of EXED for Yukon schools. The final section, entitled "What Factors are Affecting the Change?" offered participants' views of the factors that represent challenges and those that represent supports of the use of EXED in Yukon schools. I also integrated data from document analysis where it was relevant. In light of all of the data presented, I will now offer my interpretation and discussion of the results in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this discussion is to present the major findings, to interpret the findings in relation to the body of literature and to discuss the implications of the findings for theory and for practice. The three section descriptive framework presented in the results chapter guides this chapter as well. The framework represents a method for addressing the five main research questions of this study. The bulk of this discussion calls upon the relationships between this study's results and the related literature regarding educational change, EXED theory, place-based education and EXED implementation in K-12 schools.

I refer to the growth of EXED in Yukon schools as a change process and I continue to make this reference throughout the following sections of this discussion. I present the following three sections: a) Understandings of EXED and the Driving Forces Behind its Implementation in Yukon Schools; b) Suitability of EXED for Yukon K-12 Schools; and c) Challenges and Supports to EXED Implementation in Yukon Schools. One final section follows the body of the discussion in which I present a conclusion that draws together the major findings into a comprehensive model of the case and that explicates the lessons learned from this study. For the most part, I have formatted this discussion by referring back to a select quote or paraphrase as reported by either a YDE staff member, principal, or teacher and to then integrate this response into the body of relevant literature. I have identified instances when there were notable differences between sub-groups (staff, principals, and teachers) and I discuss possible implications for these differences. For example, I discuss the section on "time constraints" as a challenge without much reference to sub-groups because all but one participant cited this

challenge. However, in another section I discuss the implications of the fact that only teachers and principals cited "colleague collaboration" as a supporting factor.

Understandings of EXED and the Driving Forces Behind its Implementation in Yukon Schools

This first section of the discussion will describe the change toward implementing EXED, as expressed by participants and as interpreted by me in relation to the body of literature. In the first part, I discuss the terminologies and understandings related to EXED. The final section involves a discussion of the direction from which the change is being driven.

Terminologies and understandings of (EXED).

I prepared for my discussions with participants and for the analysis of documents by reviewing the relevant literature on this specific issue. This review, as incorporated in brief below, served to inform the interview questions and provided a starting point from where I begin this discussion. I first discuss the terminologies used by participants and then follow with a discussion regarding definitions and understandings.

The participants of this study employed the terms EXED, EL, outdoor experiential education or integrated studies as a descriptor for the topic of the study. More specifically, four respondents used the term EXED and each of the remaining participants chose to use one of the three other terms. In addition, the YDE used EXED and EL interchangeably within the analyzed documents.

To me, the results became more interesting when I looked at this data as it relates to each sub-group. In brief, both principals and two of the YDE staff members chose to use EXED in our discussion. I was struck by the fact that neither teacher chose to use

EXED and instead used EL and integrated studies as chosen terms. As I did not uncover anything in the EXED literature related to this specific phenomenon, I was left wondering why this was the case. I now wonder if there was a gap between the knowledge bases of the front-line practitioners and those of the principals and staff members? However, a statement made by one of the teachers contradicted this thought. He suggested that, for matters of EXED curriculum content and delivery methods, the YDE often defers to teachers who have experience and authority with EXED in Yukon schools. I am now left wondering about if and how those teachers and principals who don't have experience and authority with EXED in Yukon schools go about attaching labels and definitions to EXED.

The variation in the use of differing terminologies was surprising given my own experiences with learning about these pedagogies and given the ways in which they are represented within the literature. Both the literature and the results of this study show that there are multiple terms that are used to refer to the concept of EXED.

In Chapter 2, experiential education and experiential learning were described as terms that have often been used interchangeably in educational circles (Itin, 1999). For example, Itin and others acknowledge that, depending upon their area of specialization, practitioners and theorists alike often refer to EXED and EL in other terms such as, outdoor education, field work, internships, previous work experience, adventure education, environmental education, vocational education, field trips, lab work, simulations or games (Luckmann, 1996; Roberts, 2008; Wurdinger, 1995). Itin claims that variations in language use are the result of a lack of understanding of EXED definitions amongst practitioners and theorists. Roberts, also acknowledges that there are

multiple and varied terms and understandings of experiential theory but claims, rather, that the variations exist because one group creates meanings of experiential theory differently than the next group and that these differences should be celebrated. The ideas put forth by Itin and Roberts will be revisited in the remarks that follow.

The results of this study also showed multiple and varied understandings of EXED. Most of the respondents were able to easily verbalize a multi-faceted personal definition of their chosen terminology. In agreement with the EL literature, all participants and documents commonly expressed the notion that EXED is based upon learning through hands-on experiences (AEE, 2009; Joplin, 1981; Knapp, 1992; Kolb, 1984; Seaman, 2008; Stehno, 1986).

In addition, all participants commonly alluded to an understanding of EXED as a method for encouraging learners to make connections between different experiences. This is reflective of the constructivist nature of EXED, attributable to Piaget (as cited in Quay, 2003), suggesting that in interacting with the world, the learner constructs knowledge by making connections between his or her present and past experiences. Paulo Freire (1994), Kurt Hahn (as cited in Lund, 1997) and a number of other theorists have stressed that learning happens by making sense of our experiences through a reflective process (Joplin, 1981; Knapp, 1992; Kolb, 1984; Seaman, 2008; Stehno, 1986). Most participants mentioned a reflective or discussion component as part of the EXED process. As an example, one of the YDE staff members explained in his definition of outdoor experiential education that there is always a reflection period that prepares a learner for engaging in a new experience that serves to make connections to previous experiences. He called this the "processing" stage. This seems to echo the reflection and

abstraction/ generalizing stages of the step-wise process of EL that a number of theorists have described (Joplin; Knapp; Kolb; Seaman; Stehno).

For the most part, it seems that respondents in my study held an understanding of the methodological side of EXED. Itin and Roberts suggest however that an understanding of this alone is insufficient. Roberts' concept of neo-experientialism seems to highlight an approach to experience-based education that does little more than to simply offer an experience to learners. Neo-experiential learning experiences, in essence, are superficial, consumptive and uncritical experiences that are offered in neatly structured packages that often deny learners the opportunity for creation, participation and in-depth reflection (Roberts). In light of this, I wonder, were respondents in my study expressing a belief that EXED in Yukon schools goes beyond the neo-experientialist learning experience into the realm of purposeful, critical and intentional learning experiences? This query is explored in the following remarks.

Notably, the two participants who had the least experience with offering EXED, a teacher and a principal, struggled somewhat to offer a personal definition when asked to do so. For instance, the teacher suggested that EL is "whatever you can come up with at the time". Though this teacher may have struggled to verbalize her understanding when questioned, she later went on to describe some specific examples of how her programming is based on hands-on experiences. In addition, and even more striking, was the fact that she stated, more clearly than other participants, that she is also mindful of having intention and purpose in her EL programming. Though she used EL as her chosen terminology, it seems she was more specifically describing a philosophy that was in alignment with the AEE (2009) definition of EXED that, in part, states that educators

engage with learners in purposeful experience. A YDE staff member also described a similar idea in his understandings of EXED. He explained that when he helps out with a class canoe trip, the setting and the activity act as learning tools and his intention is to introduce concepts, such as river quality and dynamics, through the experience. Breunig (2009) also suggests that when experiential education programs are guided by intended outcomes they become, "an intentional, purposeful approach to teaching and learning" (p. 3). An educator's focus on being purposeful and intentional characterizes perhaps the most important aspect of EXED pedagogy (Breunig, 2009). The data, in the two aforementioned instances, also links with Itin's call for more educators to view EXED as both a methodology and a purposeful philosophy of education.

The previously mentioned teacher also said that she believed that the activities alone were not educative and that with students she focused on discussing the implications of the learning experiences upon future experiences. I am left to wonder if this teacher was unconsciously competent with EXED theory. In other words, could she "do" even though she was not able to "define?" Dewey (1938) reminds us that experiences are not educative on their own. The educator is charged with the task of intentionally and purposefully guiding the reflective, formative and abstractive processes. This relates as well to Roberts' (2008) notion of interactive experience that is touted as a more intentional approach than that of the neo-experientialist approach. Roberts as well suggests that learning happens by connecting experiences of the past, present and future.

One of the YDE staff members suggested in his definition that EXED is not solely focused on providing physical challenges, as is so often thought to be the case in Yukon schools. Rather, it is often about responding to a community's social and emotional

needs and challenges. He explained that the learning process relates to an increased awareness of the out-of-the-class world around learners. Another staff member explained that he uses canoe trips as a method for engaging in discussions with learners regarding environmental ethics and challenges of land-use specific to the location in which the trip is happening. This finding shows that the two YDE staff members are engaging with one of Roberts' (2008) conceptions of experiential theory that goes beyond neo-experientialism. Specifically, Roberts explains that the notion of critical theory as experience views learning experiences as a way to "foster a kind of critical consciousness that attempts to reveal structural and systemic inequality while also providing a sense of urgency to act locally on these injustices" (p. 27).

Itin's (1999) understanding of EXED is centered on the notions that: (a) both the learner and the educator are involved in a transactive process that recognizes and calls upon the experience and knowledge of each person; and (b) both the educator and the learner have an affect on the learning environment and vice-versa, thus, suggesting that EXED has the potential for affecting social change. In light of the above discussion, it seems as though, to a greater degree, the results point to an alignment with the first notion of Itin's model. In other words, the majority of the understandings and definitions from participants and documents focused on the methodological components of EXED theory. To a lesser degree, the results show that participants understand EXED as in Itin's second notion listed above- of the potential of EXED to serve as a vehicle for social change through an awareness created by purposeful and intentional learning experiences. In addition, there is some evidence to suggest that EXED in Yukon schools represents something different than the neo-experiential approach criticized by Roberts (2008).

Specifically, a couple of respondents expressed alignment with experience as interaction and two others expressed alignment with critical theory as experience, as explicated above. The representation of multiple meanings in the data is consistent with Roberts' suggestion that the meaning of experience in education is varied.

In essence, the data shows more agreement in terms of methodological approaches, and less agreement in terms of philosophical understandings. Itin might suggest that the proliferation of a holisitic and all-encompassing definition and understanding of EXED within the Yukon K-12 education system would aid in the growth and acceptance of EXED in Yukon schools. However, Roberts (2008) may suggest that public debate amongst stakeholders within the Yukon education system needs to happen in order to recognize, understand and deconstruct the multitude of understandings and definitions. In doing so, Roberts highlights three distinct advantages. First, a more inclusive and diverse conception of the theory of experience may develop thus improving practice. Second, alliances across previously unconnected groups may form by virtue of the commonality of being educators who use experience in the learning environment. And, third, the new alliance then has the opportunity to open up discussion regarding the role of EXED within K-12 schools. It is important to recognize that the third advantage should not be pursued without first engaging in debate and forming alliances. Perhaps the question that remains then, for further study of Yukon schools, is, "where to begin"? Are discussions ongoing within the community of educators? Have potential alliances been formed? Is the Yukon education system ready to engage in a discussion regarding the role of EXED in Yukon schools?

Driving forces behind Experiential Education implementation.

My initial formal exposure to EXED in Yukon schools came in the form of the YDE reports and documents mentioned in the introduction chapter. In brief, the reports recommended that the YDE should be doing more to encourage and support the use of EXED in Yukon K-12 schools. It was my understanding, during the design phase of this study, that the change related to offering more EXED in Yukon schools was, in a historical sense, and would be in the future, primarily under the directorate of the YDE. However, with each passing interview, this understanding changed. This section will discuss driving forces behind the implementation of EXED in Yukon K-12 schools. It should be noted that in some instances I defer discussion of certain supports and challenges to the final section of this chapter so that the focus of this sub-section can remain centered on the driving forces.

The most commonly expressed themes, as shown by Figure 5, are that: (a) presently, EXED in Yukon schools is primarily driven by bottom-up, school or teacher driven initiatives; and (b) presently, EXED is secondarily supported by YDE tools and resources. Thus, EXED is being implemented in Yukon schools through somewhat of a mixed approach including both top-down (YDE) and bottom-up (teacher/ principal) efforts. In addition, a staff member and both teachers suggested that, for the future, the source of the efforts should be more equally balanced or perhaps even more heavily weighted on the top-down side of the scale.

In light of both document analysis and participant responses related to the ways in which programs are administered and maintained, I was led toward a body of relevant literature focusing on educational change theory (Fullan, 1994; Fullan, 1998; Fullan,

2001; Gallagher, 1995; McBeath, 1997; McNeal & Christy, 2001; Rust & Freidus, 2001; Sashkin & Egermeier, 1992). Fullan (2001) describes that the process of educational change "is not just putting into place the latest policy. It means changing the cultures of the classrooms, the schools, the districts, the universities, and so on" (p. 7). Various other theorists have provided definitions of educational change (McBeath, 1997; McNeal and Christy, 2001; Sashkin and Egermeier, 1992).

McNeal and Christy (2001) argue that, often, educational change occurs simultaneously on a number of levels but that the various operating levels often do not work in coordination. In addition, educational change is most effective when the change reflects localized needs of the school. In alignment with McNeal and Christy's first notion, the results from my study suggest that the implementation of EXED in Yukon schools is happening at the school level and at the departmental level and that on certain issues, such as staff training, there is a lack of coordination. I do not want to discount the support the YDE has provided for a number of schools. However, as will be discussed later, my study results clearly indicate that some of the actual needs of teachers are not being recognized and some of the supports that do exist may be difficult to access, such as funding.

Regarding McNeal and Christy's second notion, that change is effective when it reflects the localized needs of a school, it seems as though the change that has been ongoing (the steady growth of the use of EXED) reflects the local needs of Yukon schools. As a number of participants pointed out, EXED programming is seen as an effective tool for reaching out to students who are struggling with Mainstream Education (ME) methods of instruction.

A number of authors have suggested that, for a very long time, educational change was guided by rationalist tendencies (Gallagher, 1995; Rust and Freidus, 2001; Sashkin and Egermeier, 1992). True to the rationalist philosophy, theorists and researchers used empirical data to create the information and tools that were to be "passed down" to teachers and administrators to encourage change in their schools. Thus, the rationalists were considered the agents of change. This style of educational change is not reflected in this study, as explained below.

Rather, the cultural approach, as explained by Sashkin and Egermeier (1992), assumes that change occurs when cultural meanings and values shift and this change is often brought about by change agents or organizational leaders. This philosophy seems to be in alignment with how the change in the Yukon case came about and how it may continue. The participants from my study, who were able to recall the historical beginnings of EXED's use in Yukon schools, spoke of how communities, teachers and First Nations groups worked together to create the EXED programming. EXED programming was originally given a "push" from the YDE in the late 1980's in response to a drop in student achievement and engagement.

As mentioned in the results by two YDE staff members, the school sites that were trying to implement EXED were responding to the shift in values that was being recommended by the YDE, community members and First Nations groups. According to the staff members, the teachers who were responding to the "push" by offering EXED programming were the ones that were driving the change and thus, were the change agents. In addition, as a third staff member described, the initial push came from the Minister of Education who introduced a new model of integrated programming.

The original ACES program was developed in the late 1980's as a result of the YDE's interest in bringing EXED programming to more students in the Yukon. Since then, a number of other integrated studies programs (ISP) have been created at the Wood Street School and a small handful at regular elementary or secondary public school sites. While EXED programming was happening on a small-scale, local-level basis prior to the late 1980's, this new ISP model invited schools to do more outdoor and experiential education and offered an example of what could be done. Thus, it seems that ISP's in the Yukon have been a vehicle for laying part of the foundation for EXED programming to be utilized in standard classroom settings outside of the Wood Street School.

The initial push from the "top" combined with the continued and renewed efforts from the "bottom" aligns with Fullan's notion of effective educational change. In essence, Fullan argues that educational change has the greatest chance of success when the various levels of change agents act in coordination. A steering committee for the creation of the new programming was created that involved teachers, YDE staff members and members of the First Nations community. This coordination set the stage for bottom-up initiatives to continue to grow with assistance from the YDE.

The future of EXED implementation in Yukon schools is questionable in terms of how it will be driven, according to the results of this study. Most participants suggested that an equally mixed approach of YDE and school based efforts would be effective. In other words, equal efforts should come from both schools and the YDE. If the driving forces shift further toward the top-down side, a change in implementation philosophy, to the political approach, may be observed. The political approach assumes that when policy controls in the form of mandates, inducements, capacity building and system

changing are passed down from power groups, often made into law, then lower-level agents will make changes (Sashkin & Egermeier, 1992). Both teachers in my study warned against this change in direction. One of the teachers explained that the YDE must be respectful in honouring what the teachers and the schools had already accomplished. An attitude of "teamwork" should be maintained in which the YDE asks "how can we help and how can we make it grow" rather than a full takeover of responsibilities according to participant reports.

A few studies have pointed out that top-down strategies, when used in isolation, rarely succeed in achieving their prescribed goals (Berman and McLauglin, 1977; Goodlad, 1992; Sarason, 1990; Wilson and Corbett, 1990). These studies generally concluded that top-down strategies are politically driven and actually do little to address the actual needs of teachers and learners. In addition, a handful of authors have suggested that approaches that employ bottom-up strategies solely are often unsuccessful on some level (Fullan, 2001; Taylor & Teddlie, 1992). These studies reported that these types of reforms simply shift the governance and decision making to schools who are often not adequately prepared with the tools to affect change on their own and, thus, learners don't benefit.

The participants in this study reported that the implementation of EXED is generally a blend of top-down and bottom-up efforts. Participants reported that EXED initiatives generally begin with the school (teachers and principals) and are supported by the YDE. Essentially, as shown in Figure 5 of the Results chapter, EXED implementation initiatives lie along a continuum that is bounded on its ends by either bottom-up or top-down efforts. Fullan (1998) suggests that for educational change to be

successful, top-down and bottom-up strategies need to be coordinated in a manner that encourages the development of rapport between the two levels. Top-down players must focus on capacity building and must provide incentives and supports alongside their policy compliance initiatives (Fullan). From the bottom-up perspective, local-level educators, principals, students and parents must take the initiative to wade through the intricacies of the "system" in their efforts to instigate and carry through the change. It seems that the current model of operation for EXED implementation in Yukon schools follows the ideas of Fullan. In essence, schools initiate EXED projects and the YDE provides supports. I wonder though about how the process might change if EXED was mandated or put into policy?

A few authors have more recently explicated the ways in which successful change can happen (Fullan, 2000; Rust and Freidus, 2001). A staff member and a principal from my study described that there is a mixture of opinions from parents regarding the implementation of EXED. Some parents are supportive and others are not simply because they do not want their kids to be part of an "experiment" as teachers work on figuring out how to offer EXED programming. Fullan argued that change occurs successfully when the most vested stakeholders including teachers, parents, community members and students share a common rapport. In essence, there must be support for change on a number of levels. This lack of support from some parents and community members, as this study shows, makes for the development of a common rapport a difficult prospect.

Rust and Freidus (2001) also claim that to increase chances of success with change efforts, local change agents, including teachers, principals and departmental

mentors, must possess certain abilities, including acting as negotiators, nurturers, teacher-learners and curriculum developers. Participants of this case said that teachers may feel challenged in their efforts to develop curriculum due to a lack of training. One would expect then that mentors would be the ones to aid teachers in curriculum development. In this case, some participants claimed that there is enough assistance from mentors while others claimed that more is needed. This study also reflects Rust and Freidus's view that more time is needed for preparation and development of curricular resources.

In addition to exploring participants' understandings of EXED and of the process of EXED implementation, this study also investigated the factors that make EXED suitable for Yukon schools.

Suitability of Experiential Education for Yukon K-12 Schools

This section is related to the research question of "what factors contribute to EXED's suitability for Yukon schools?" I have grouped the three categories presented in the results chapter into one section here because they are so closely linked. In the following I will discuss the claims made by participants that EXED is suitable for Yukon schools because: (a) it "fits" the northern community predisposition of Yukon, (b) it is culturally appropriate for Yukon's First Nations students, and (c) it is able to appropriately utilize external resources and opportunities for learning.

I struggled in the beginning to find the place in the literature from which I could start exploring this query. I eventually came across the literature on place-based education and found it to be a good "fit" for the questions I wanted to ask. Thus, I have situated the interpretation of this section within place-based education literature.

For Kemp (2006) the question that is central to the educational change process and, more relevant to this study, the curriculum change process is "what should be taught" (Kemp, 2006). I also wish to add that we must consider the question of "how should it be taught". Place-based education considers both of these questions in an effort to root education "in the local setting, giving greater attention to place, and finding ways to make connections to the community, its history, culture, economic circumstances, arts, flora, fauna and landscapes" (Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1999, p. 10). From a methodological perspective, place-based "practices and purposes can be connected to experiential learning, contextual learning, problem-based learning, constructivism, outdoor education, indigenous education, environmental and ecological education, bioregional education, democratic education, multi-cultural education, community-based education.... as well as other approaches" (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 3).

Participants listed various examples of what I termed a "northern community predisposition" and what a staff member referred to as a "northern understanding of living". Examples of this include, a "spirit of adventure", an active population, a "tradition of hunting", an awareness of sharing a habitat with other species, and doing "on the land activities". These examples were explained further as components of a "Yukon culture" or a "northern culture". Blank, Johnson and Shaw (2003) envision the curriculum as environment and the community as text by which the curriculum is developed. EXED programming in Yukon schools happens, to a large to extent, through outdoor education programming and to a lesser extent through interaction with the broader social community. The text of Yukon's "northern community" declares, as participants pointed out, that it is an acceptable and normalized prospect to hunt for part

of your sustenance and to interact with the natural world on a regular basis. This interaction generally comes in some form of outdoor recreation, such as canoeing, or of nature appreciation, such as bird watching. This existing "text" which Blank, Johnson and Shaw refer to is drawn upon through much of Yukon's EXED programming, thus reinforcing the suitability of EXED for Yukon schools. The EXED programming in Yukon schools is, on many levels, reflective of the local environment and culture within which the schools are situated. The blending together of a culture's ways of living and school curriculum is very much reflective of the philosophy of place-based education. In essence, EXED aligns itself well with the experiential nature of the interests of Yukon's culture.

Very closely related to the concept of the northern community predisposition is the idea that EXED is suitable for Yukon schools because it is culturally appropriate for First Nations learners. The various First Nations cultures of the Yukon have a much longer and richer history of place-based activities. In addition, as one of the teachers and a principal pointed out, First Nations peoples have been teaching their young people through experience for a very long time and there's a real legitimacy for continuing with that tradition in Yukon schools.

Within the research on the use of place-based education in northern community contexts, there are a couple of recently published studies that provide linkages to my study results (Aylward, 2007; Takano, Higgins and McLaughlin, 2009). Takano, Higgins and McLaughlin (2009) conducted a study of the Russian Mission School in rural Alaska. The school began utilizing place-based education in 2001 by placing the local culture's subsistence living activities as the focus of the school curriculum. This is aligns with the

EXED programming that happens in some of Yukon's schools, such as the Bison hunt. Another school, as a principal explained, uses the natural area adjacent to the school to teach learners about edible plants, which is a tradition of Yukon First Nation's peoples. Participants claimed that the use of EXED allows First Nations students to reconnect with traditional knowledge and ways of learning. Takano et al. claimed that, in their study, the introduction of on-the-land activities as part of school was widely accepted by the community because students were re-establishing their identities as First Nations people.

Aylward (2007) offers a critique of her experiences as a teacher in a Nunavut school in Northern Canada. Specifically, she discusses the role of cultural relevance in educational change in the territory of Nunavut. She also asserts that land-based activities offer valuable learning experiences for First Nations learners. The principles of Inuit Indigenous Peoples are beginning to work their way into curriculum through a community negotiation process. According to the results of this study and resonant with the above, one of the YDE staff members noted that some of the rural communities with a higher ratio of First Nations students have asked the YDE to engage in curriculum negotiation processes whereby more land-based and culturally relevant EXED programming was developed.

Finally, five participants suggested that EXED is suitable for Yukon schools because of the availability of external resources and opportunities. Again, this is very closely linked to the other two suitability factors. Examples of such resources and opportunities included, visiting the mountains for geography lessons, good winter conditions for and access to dogsledding, snow-machining and snowshoeing, natural spaces in school backyards and access to mine sites. Both principals and teachers

suggested that it simply makes sense to offer EXED programming in the natural spaces of the Yukon because they are accessible and they have the ability to enhance learning experiences. Scott (2002) agrees in noting that by connecting with natural spaces, learners are able to develop a sense of place. A sense of place is a "sense of history, of human and non-human interactions, and the vital connection between where we live and who we are" (Scott, p. 5).

EXED was reported to be a suitable method for teaching and learning in Yukon schools for three primary reasons. The actual process of EXED implementation, including its related supporting and challenging factors, was also explored in this study.

Challenges and Supports to Experiential Education Implementation in Yukon Schools

Before writing this section, I reflected upon the solution-oriented attitudes of the participants of this study. I felt hopeful that the motivation and optimism of the respondents would continue to carry EXED through its growth in Yukon schools. On most occasions, participants would cite a challenge or a support and would then offer a solution to the challenge or a way to enhance the support.

As in the results section, I interpret and discuss the challenges and supports in descending order of most frequently cited to least frequently cited. I first present the "challenges" section and will conclude with the "supports" section.

Challenges.

The body of literature regarding the challenges of implementing EXED in K-12 schools is quite robust. While there is some literature related to the challenges faced by teachers there is very little as related to the part that principals play in EXED

implementation in K-12 schools (Blair, 2009). A number of challenges were cited by participants. The six most oft-cited challenges are presented in the following section.

Time constraints.

Every participant except for one staff member mentioned that EXED was difficult to implement in the classroom because EXED demands more time from the teacher. Respondents generally talked about teachers feeling already "bogged down" by the standard expectations and that teachers' everyday lived constraints and responsibilities do not allow them to put more time into, for example, developing new lessons or fundraising with students for EXED programming.

This same challenge is referenced in a couple of previous studies (Blair, 2009; Dillon, 2006). Blair (2009) took note of the challenges of offering school gardening as a form of EXED in K-12 schools. She looked at this from the perspective of the teachers and the principals. In discovering very little research regarding the role of the principal, Blair called for more research to be done regarding the effect of the principal in the process of offering school gardening. In addition, Blair notes that one of the major challenges to integrating school gardening with regular classroom instruction is a lack of time. Blair does not specify if this "lack" of time relates to class period lengths, preparation time or another aspect. In the same style as Blair, Dillon et al. (2006) simply list a shortage of time as a notable barrier found within their review of 150 articles related to outdoor education.

Weinbaum et al. (1996) conducted a study of the Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound Project (ELOB). The ELOB Project, involving the participation of 10 schools over a two-year term, represented an experiment in educational reform. The

authors evaluated how the ELOB Project was implemented in schools, how schools changed as a result of implementation, and the impact the program had on the students. Teachers worked at creating the curriculum content of the ELOB Project. The teachers were responsible for meeting city and state education requirements and for creating content that was relevant and important to learners. As the teachers were the ones responsible for the creation of curriculum content, they claimed that the extra time needed to do this was essential for their success.

In a similar light, one of the principals involved in my study expressed his concern with the lack of time teachers have for collaborating with one another. He said that this is especially true in relation to the development of EXED programming. As there are no guidelines for EXED curriculum development in Yukon schools, teachers, past and present, represent the creative force behind new development. For more teachers to be able to offer EXED opportunities in the classroom, the principal had suggested that more collaborative time be afforded to teachers. Weinbaum et al.'s study represented somewhat of a special case given the radical shift in curriculum delivery methods with the adoption of the ELOB model. This shift necessitated a change in the amount of time teachers and principals were given for lesson planning and for the creation of new methods for facilitating learning. Given that the ELOB pilot project was so successful, it seems that more research is needed about schools that have allowed more collaborative time when implementing EXED programming. Thinking about this now, I wish that I had dug a little deeper into the principal's thoughts about how he thought extra time could be structured. For example, would the collaborative time happen during

weekend retreats, during the hour before or after the school day or perhaps during more frequent professional development days?

Another principal said it's obvious which teachers are saying "no way" to putting in extra time and effort and which teachers are enthusiastic enough to put in the extra effort to offer EXED in the classroom. He recommended that school-based and YDE-based efforts be directed toward those teachers in the middle who have not made up their minds yet simply because they do not have enough information to make a decision. It is those in the middle who are saying "I can see why it would work, but how do we do it". The principal claimed that EXED is a "buzz word" amongst the broader community of educators now and it is generally understood as an alternative approach to learning and teaching. Now, he said, is the time to work toward providing the mass in the middle with the needed direction and resources to allow them to be successful in offering EXED programming. A YDE staff member also suggested that certain resources, with an emphasis on YDE-provided mentorship, would aid teachers in using their time more effectively in creating EXED programming. More will be said about this in the "lack of mentorship" section.

Lack of teacher training.

Five respondents explained that teachers are challenged in offering EXED due to a lack of teacher training.

A small handful of studies exist regarding the notion that a lack of teacher training is a barrier to EXED implementation (Blair, 2009; Conrad and Hedin, 1981; Dillon et al., 2006; Jickling, 1991). Most of these do not directly cite a lack of teacher training as a potential challenge. Rather, as in Dillon et al., a lack of confidence in teaching using an

OE model is listed as a barrier. Based on what participants in my study said, a lack of confidence may be related to a lack of teacher training. For example, a YDE staff member spoke of the consulting role he occasionally offers to teachers. Teachers may call him to come in for a day to help experientially teach a certain lesson. He said that these teachers are simply apprehensive and are requesting someone to offer them an example from which the teacher can learn.

Bob Jickling (1991) conducted a study in which he made queries into environmental education's (EE) place in Yukon K-12 schools. Jickling interviewed teachers in his study and asked questions specifically related to EE pedagogy. The respondents observed various benefits for the learner when EE programs were offered in the K-12 school setting. Teachers in this study were also queried as to how they felt they could be successful if they were asked to continue to offer environmental education programming in a K-12 school environment (Jickling, 1991). Respondents agreed that initiatives to support teachers would have to be in place including professional development. Jickling suggests teachers should not be expected to "respond well to an unfathomable task" (p. 147) such as when new curriculum innovations are proposed. Often teacher training institutions are not adequately preparing teachers for EE or EXED-based teaching and learning (Jickling).

This resonates with what one of the YDE staff members spoke of. He acknowledged that the YDE needs to be offering more opportunities for staff training. Yukon teachers sometimes come to YDE staff members with the idea that they'd like to offer EXED programming but they simply don't know how to do it, he said. They don't understand the theoretical foundations and, more specifically, they struggle to find ways

to align their EXED ideas with the learning outcomes that are prescribed by the YDE. This example also strengthens the notion that, in the Yukon, the implementation of EXED is still teacher and school driven. The ideas and the motivation begin with the teachers and the schools asking for help from the YDE or they simply "figure it out" independently. Resonant with Jickling's conclusions, is the staff member who also placed some of the responsibility on the teacher training institutions to better prepare teachers for using EXED.

This section has links to the previous section on language choices and definitions. As Itin (1999) suggests, within a group of educators, dialogue and practice are enhanced when there is a common starting point from which to work that includes a common language and understanding. It seems that this may ring true for the Yukon case as well. In other words, an enhancement or, more accurately, the provision of teacher/ principal/ staff member training related to EXED theory and practice may enable enhanced discussion between all YDE employees, thereby shifting the current information seeking exercise from a YDE centralized system to one that is decentralized.

Again, as Blair (2009) points out, there is a paucity of literature on the role that principals play in the implementation of EXED programming. I now wish I had probed more deeply into this topic, and the need for principal training. I am left wondering, do principals need the same training as teachers? What sort of training would they need in order to support EXED programming in their schools? Would issues of principals as gatekeepers change if principals had more training and understanding about EXED?

Risk management.

Five participants mentioned that EXED programming is generally associated with a greater perceived risk than ME and that this presents a challenge to implementation. Interestingly, all three staff members cited this challenge in addition to a teacher and a principal.

Participants generally alluded to physical risks in their responses and some mentioned the more recent OE-based accidents such as the Strathcona-Tweedsmuir Private School avalanche accident. In 2003, seven high school students died in an avalanche accident in British Columbia while on a backcountry ski expedition with the Strathcona-Tweedsmuir School in Alberta. It is understandable that EXED is perceived to have more physical risks associated with it simply because hands-on activities are often involved. In the Yukon case, the majority of EXED programming has historically taken the form of outdoor education for which certain inherent risks exist (Raiola & O'Keefe, 1999). For example, Yukon students venture into avalanche terrain during ski expeditions while other students are exposed to the use of firearms during Bison hunting expeditions. Notably, there seems to be a lack of empirical research to determine whether or not EXED programs actually do result in more accidents as compared to ME programs. It would seem that more research is needed in this regard, including factors such as staff training that affect the incidence of accidents.

Otherwise, a couple of studies have made reference to risk management as a challenge to offering EXED in K-12 schools (Byerly, 2001; Dillon et al., 2006). Dillon et al. simply list "fear and concern about health and safety" as a notable barrier (p. 108). Byerly is concerned that a school board may feel pressured by its insurance provider to

limit activities with a higher level of perceived risk, such as EXED. In some cases, Byerly claims that the insurance provider is willing to go beyond the "call of duty" to facilitate effective education practices. It remains to be seen in the literature if this accommodation by insurance providers is a normal occurrence or an exception to the standard rule of practice.

What is the significance of all three YDE staff members citing this challenge? Perhaps, as administrators, these participants have more exposure to departmental meetings and discussions in which the issue of conflict with an insurance provider has been discussed. I wish I had queried a little further into this issue with the staff members. I would have asked if the YDE has ever had difficulties or had to negotiate with an insurance provider specifically regarding EXED programming.

The staff members all made reference to risk assessment as a means by which the YDE has traditionally tried to mitigate certain risks. The risk assessments of activities that take place in certain areas have resulted in the development of policies and related paperwork that confront teachers wishing to undertake these activities with students, according to participant reports from my study. Risk, thus conceived, represents an indirect challenge to the actual challenge of navigating through the polices and paperwork. One of the staff members explained that some teachers do not do some of the activities anymore simply because the approval process is too restrictive and requires too much of their time.

Curriculum/ assessment constraints.

Four respondents mentioned that efforts to implement EXED are constrained by curriculum and assessment requirements. I discuss these two topics together because the

participants generally spoke of their linkages as if they represented one idea. This may be the result of what a number of researchers have referred to as the standardized testing movement as mentioned in chapter two (Crew, 1987; Ewert, 1987; Ives & Obenchain, 2006; Lindsay & Ewert, 1999). In essence, public schools across North America have become subject to a Government led effort to ensuring nation-wide consistency in learning outcomes (Lindsay & Ewert). This goal-oriented content-delivery approach to learning has meant that curriculua, and their delivery, have been tailored to ensure that learners are best prepared for standardized tests.

This seemed resonant with principal and a staff member from my study given their remarks about how teachers have very little room for experimentation with lesson content and with delivery methods. Thus, they concluded, some teachers shy away from EXED because it tends to introduce fewer concepts in exchange for exploring concepts with more depth. Some teachers fear that their students will not perform well on the standardized tests, which will in turn reflect poorly upon the teacher, according to both the principal and staff member reports.

In agreement, Millenbah and Millspaugh (2003) drew upon their experiences of facilitating EXED-based science courses. From a curriculum-based perspective, EXED programs require more time to cover content as compared to ME programs because EXED programs ask the learner to discover the theory through experience rather than asking the learner to absorb the theory by reading or listening as is the case with the ME model (Millenbah & Millspaugh). This, quite simply, often results in less coverage of curriculum content. This is an issue for learners who still need to take part in the standardized testing of ME. The researchers also suggest that learners in EXED

programs may fall behind their counterparts simply because they have not covered as much material in their EXED-based classrooms.

Principal/ administrator as gatekeeper.

Four participants suggested that a school's principal or administrator can act as a barrier to the implementation of EXED. Notably, all three staff members cited this challenge, yet no principals did.

I am curious as to why the principals did not consider themselves to at least be potential barriers? Were they not self-reflexive enough? Or, perhaps, was this again simply a case of speaking with the "converted". In other words, because the principals were already supportive of the EXED programs going on in their schools they had by default never acted as a barrier. Again, Blair (2009) simply states that principals have the potential to act as gatekeepers and she makes the call for more research on the role of principals as gatekeepers related to the implementation of EXED in K-12 schools.

Two of the staff members cited examples of principals as gatekeepers in Yukon schools. They suggested that perhaps these principals would feel differently about EXED if they had had some professional development on the topic. This connects with the fact that most participants cited a lack of teacher training as a challenging factor. Though it would seem as though principals could benefit from the same training, I am curious as to why neither of the principals suggested that they should receive staff training as well.

Teacher apprehension.

A principal and a staff member talked about the idea of teacher "buy-in". This refers to the acceptance of a particular idea, such as EXED. Quite simply, the principal explained, "some teachers have been doing things the same way for a long time and just

don't want to change." Blair (2009) cites a lack of personal interest in the culture of EXED as a major limitation to its implementation. Sometimes, as the staff member suggested, a teacher may feel disinterested because of a physical ailment. This claim may ring especially true for some Yukon teachers given that the history of EXED programming has been focused mostly on outdoor education which is usually associated with some sort of moderately energy intensive activity.

Blair explains that a teacher's interest level is affected by three factors: (a) enthusiasm of principal, (b) student excitement about EXED through promotion by other teachers, and (c) availability of semi-retired teacher whom could aid in the process. I discuss in detail the first and third factor in other sections. The second factor contradicts the comments of one of the staff members. Some teachers, he said, may feel apprehensive because they are afraid of standing out from their colleagues. These teachers don't want students to get excited about EXED because it may make other teachers feel like their programs are inadequate. This, he said, has the potential to alienate teachers.

Teacher apprehension also seems to be linked to the availability of teacher training, to time constraints and to risk perceptions as explicated in participants' responses. I will not elaborate on these challenges here because they appear in detail in other sections.

Vision/ definition unclear.

One person from each sub-group said that as there is no vision or mandate provided by the YDE, and that as the existence of a YDE definition of EXED is unknown or unclear, schools are challenged in the implementation of EXED. Document analysis

showed that while a vision or mandate does not exist, a definition does. The fact that a definition does exist in the documents suggests perhaps that teachers and principals generally do not know the information that the YDE has provided regarding EXED. Of course, this thought is only speculative as the sample size was too small to make generalizations. An alternative to the previous notion might suggest that teachers and principals do know about the YDE definition but do not think that it is comprehensive or clear enough to aid them in the process of EXED implementation. I now see that it would have been valuable to ask probing questions on this topic.

Itin (1999) claims that EXED suffers from a case of multiple identities. This claim provides an important "talking point" as discussion surrounding the topic can be a very difficult process because each of the various ideas of EXED are in fact quite distinctive on their own. Of course, while each person is entitled to his/her own definition and understanding of EXED, a group who wishes to advance the notion of EXED as a viable and effective means for educating must, as Itin suggested, form a common understanding- a consistent set of terms and a language.

In agreement, a staff member acknowledged that the YDE needs to engage in discussions with schools to determine if they want the YDE to mandate EXED or simply to provide an overarching philosophy. A principal expressed concern that there is no real consensus in the YDE as to the efficacy of EXED and that this value judgment first needs to be made in order to decide how much growth should occur. In addition, a teacher recommended that a manual or a book of parameters be provided to express what EXED should look like in schools.

Contrasting with all other participants, one of the teachers said that his knowledge of a "loose" definition of EXED from YDE is actually supportive. He said that he would rather be given such open-ended guidance because it allows a teacher to teach according to their strengths. In addition, giving teachers a mold within which they would have to fit themselves would be ineffective. I wonder now if this is what other teachers would say? Or, would most teachers want a set of guiding principals to follow? Given that this teacher has had a number of years of experience with offering EXED programs in Yukon schools, he may be an exception. He may not need the structure that teachers who are newer to EXED may need. Or, rather, he may understand the inherent complexities of EXED better than others (Roberts, 2008). As Roberts argues, experiential theory consists of a plurality of definitions and understandings. In this light, educators should be encouraged to share and practice according to their own understandings so as to allow each part of the community of educators to enrich the whole (Roberts). A study with a larger sample size should be conducted that includes a query regarding Yukon teachers' opinions on how much guidance they would like from the YDE to really explore this question further.

Lack of departmental mentorship.

One participant from each group suggested a lack of mentorship from YDE presents a challenge for EXED implementation. All three participants said that the small amount of mentorship that is provided is insufficient for all of the teachers wanting to develop EXED programming. Mostly, it was suggested that mentorship is needed to help teachers to come up with ideas for EXED programming and to provide information on EXED theory. It would seem that some of the pressure to use mentors would be

alleviated if adequate professional development was provided and if YDE provided a resource for teachers on how to align EXED with current desired learning outcomes.

Jickling (1991) offered a similar perspective and an additional caution. In Jickling's study, two views of mentorship, or resource personnel are provided. First, resource people have the ability to share background information and their specialized knowledge. As long as teachers are clear with what role they would like the resource personnel to play, the experience is generally beneficial. Second, overuse of resource people can diminish teachers' capabilities and sense of responsibility. Jickling cautions that resource people should be utilized wisely. More research is needed on the role that mentors plays in EXED implementation.

Small school/ class size.

Two participants mentioned that the size of school or class size can act as a limitation to EXED implementation. The reasons for the existence of this challenge were again focused on the OE side of Yukon EXED programming. A teacher spoke of how challenging it is for a school without sufficient student numbers to receive funding for the purchase of equipment such as snowshoes. Even when a school is awarded funding, the stability of EXED programs are always in question. The teacher used an example of the school in Haines Junction. This school received funding to start a new program that is based on one of the Wood Street School models of integrated studies. Recently, the program has not run simply because an insufficient number of students signed up for the course. This can be a challenge for Yukon's rural schools where class sizes may range from five to ten students depending upon the year.

In my review of the literature, I did not find any references to how school or class size affects the implementation of EXED. Perhaps more research is needed in this area. While the lack of relevant literature may show that this phenomenon is rare, I believe that it may be quite common for many northern communities given that population sizes are often quite small in relation to the cities of the rest of the country. This limitation for smaller rural schools often means that elementary students from the rural schools do not have the same EXED opportunities as do elementary students who attend school in the Whitehorse area. Once rural students are ready for high school, they move to student residences in Whitehorse and attend school in the city away from their home villages. This gives most of Yukon's high school students access to the same opportunities. It is the rural elementary students that may be missing out on EXED programming. I now see that I should have dug a little deeper into this query with YDE staff members.

Lack of funding.

A teacher and a principal both shared their experiences with being challenged by a lack of funding for EXED implementation.

Byerly (2001) recognizes that the school board and the school should be willing to provide some or all of the funding that may be necessary for appropriate EXED programming. Should the funding not be available, the educator and students are then responsible for fundraising or seeking out grants to initiate the projects. A teacher agreed in claiming that after her efforts to seek funds from YDE were stalled by "bureaucracy", she and her students decided to raise the needed funds on their own time. It should be clarified that the teacher explained that the process of applying for funding was the challenge rather than the actual lack of funding.

While I do recognize that some EXED programming requires supplementary financial resources, I am somewhat concerned with the common perception that EXED cannot be done without some sort of extra funding. This is evidenced as well in the "supports" section. Is this the result again of the OE focus to Yukon's EXED programming? Would this perception of funding needs change if staff training about EXED attempted to broaden the scope of what can be done to include non-resource and non-equipment intensive in-class or in-the-schoolyard experiences?

Supports.

As mentioned in chapter two, the literature regarding those factors that support the implementation of EXED is substantial. However, the majority of participants in those studies were teachers. Thus, there exists a gap in the literature about principals' perceptions about how EXED can be successfully implemented into K-12 schools, as supported by Blair (2009).

Funding availability.

Most participants cited the availability of the experiential education fund as a supporting factor for EXED implementation. This fund, as a staff member claimed, is over and above core funding and is worth about five hundred thousand dollars a year. In theory, this is available to 28 Yukon schools. In thinking about the challenges of small rural schools, I wonder about the historical trend of utilization of this fund. Do all schools try to access it? Do certain schools access more funding than other schools (ie. Whitehorse vs. rural schools; elementary vs. secondary schools)? If differences exist, why is this so? If this is not already known by the YDE, I recommend that this aspect be studied in the near future.

According to Byerly (2001) and Millenbaugh and Millspaugh (2003), one of the most effective ways that a department of education can support EXED use in schools is to provide needed finances or needed equipment and learning materials. In this manner, a teacher in my study acknowledged that teachers can apply to the Yukon Teachers Association for funding for professional development. For example, teachers have used the fund in the past to attend avalanche awareness training or to attend risk management conferences. Other participants claimed that many schools have been able to purchase equipment for OE-based programming, such as snowshoes, as a result of the funding provided by YDE.

The Yukon seems to represent a unique case in terms of the amount of funding that is provided for "alternative" forms of learning. In recent years, there has been a national movement toward standardization and a movement away from innovative teaching and learning, such as environmental education (Bondar et al., 2007). This shift signaled a reduction in funding for innovative programming ideas as funding was re-focused on the "basics" of curriculum, including reading, writing and arithmetic (Bondar et al.). Perhaps it was the Yukon's history with EXED programming that facilitated the Yukon Government's budgetary decision to continue to provide funding for EXED programming. Perhaps YDE was already convinced of the merits of EXED and as a result "steadied their course" when the rest of the nation saw cuts to its "alternative" philosophies of teaching and learning. Whatever the case may be, the availability of funding for EXED seems to be the most substantial support that the YDE provides.

Mentorship.

Five participants described the availability of mentorship regarding EXED programming as a support. It was reported that the mentors are available to help out during field trips and to provide on-site training to teachers through demonstrations in their classrooms. Rust and Freidus (2001) claim that mentors may be called upon to act as change agents. As change agents, they must possess certain qualities such as acting as negotiators, nurturers, teacher-learners and curriculum developers. YDE-provided mentors seem to be acting as curriculum developers and nurturers of EXED programming. However, there was no reference made to mentors as negotiators. In other words, it is unclear whether mentors are being used as "go-between" people, communicating the needs of schools and the needs of the YDE to each side. It is recommended that mentors act as temporary negotiators between schools and the YDE until a more appropriate system can be developed.

Parental/ community involvement.

Four participants cited parental/ community involvement as a supporting factor. Of note, neither of the principals made reference to this supporting factor. Generally, the participants said that parents view EXED as a positive enhancement to their child's learning experience. Most parents and community members attend class functions related to the EXED programming such as potlucks that follow hunting field trips. As well, a staff member explained that there is enough of a history of EXED programming in Yukon schools that parents who saw success with one of their older children will support EXED programming for the younger child. Fullan (2000) suggests that the chances for an increased success rate with change is dependent upon vested stakeholders including

teachers, parents, community and students sharing a common rapport. It would seem that research querying parents and students is needed to determine if a common rapport does exist in the Yukon case, at least between teachers, students and parents. It is unclear why neither principal cited parental/ community involvement as a support and I did not uncover any other examples of this in the literature. I was left wondering if principals see a different side of parents? Or, do they see more of the concerned parents than do the teachers and staff members?

Other supports.

Of note, only the three staff members cited staff training as a supporting factor. As the literature related to this has been discussed previously, I will not go into more detail in that regard. I am left to wonder though, "why was this only cited by the three staff members?" Is there simply a lack of understanding between the teachers and the YDE? Does the YDE think that they are providing enough and do the teachers feel they need more? It now seems that more probing into this issue would have been helpful.

Conclusion

The purpose of this discussion has been to present the major findings, to interpret the findings in relation to the body of literature and to discuss the implications of the findings for theory and for practice. The descriptive framework presented in the results chapter has guided this chapter as well. The substance of the discussion called upon the relationships between this study's results and the related literature regarding educational change, EXED theory, place-based education and EXED implementation in K-12 schools. I presented the following three sections: a) Understandings of EXED and the Driving Forces Behind its Implementation in Yukon Schools; b) Suitability of EXED for

Yukon K-12 Schools; and c) Challenges and Supports to EXED Implementation in Yukon Schools. To conclude this report, I present a brief summary of the findings and a description of the lessons learned from this case along with related recommendations.

Summary.

As a method for visually summarizing the findings of this study and to show some of the relationships between the findings I have created a comprehensive model of the process of implementing EXED in Yukon's K-12 Schools (Figure 9). To avoid repeating the study's findings at length, I will describe the model in brief. The top half of the model represents the process of educational change in theory. The bottom half represents this case. Fullan's (2001) notion of "reculturing" suggests that agents at all levels of the change must be in discussion of ideas in the early stages and must disseminate foundational ideas in the initiation and implementation stages. This study suggested that while there is a common understanding of the importance of EXED, system-wide discussion and dissemination of ideas and understandings is fairly weak. Generally, EXED initiatives begin at independent sites and are supported by some YDE supports and resources. In addition, initiatives are challenged by certain conditions.

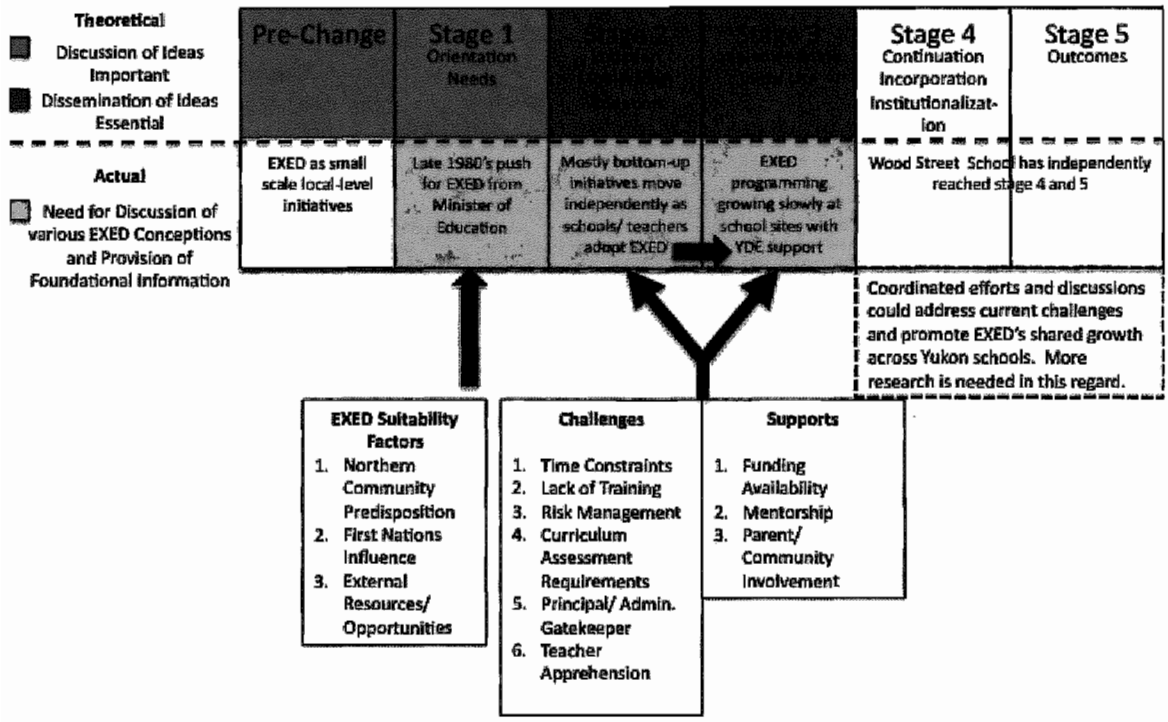

Figure 9. The process of implementing Experiential Education in Yukon K-12 schools (Adapted from McBeath, 1997).

Lessons learned and recommendations.

I've identified two important lessons that have been learned from this study. The lessons are derived from the data and are supported by the literature. I also considered how the teachers, principals and staff members involved in this study might feel if asked about the important messages to be derived from their stories.

The multiplicity of meanings and definitions has value.

Itin (1999) sees the multiple identities of EXED as a barrier while Roberts (2008) sees it as one of its most important features. The participants of this study have

expressed multiple terms and meanings for EXED. Perhaps both views have merit for the Yukon case. Roberts' argument may provide the space and encouragement for all voices to be heard on what EXED can represent. But, is it practical as a long-term solution? What if the discussion just continued on without anything being put into practice? Most importantly, would students actually benefit? Itin's ideas may encourage Yukon educators and the YDE to quickly adopt a common philosophy and set of best practices for implementing EXED, thus offering more students EXED sooner. But, would all voices be given the chance to present their conceptions of EXED? Would the richness and robustness of the varied understandings be missing from EXED learning environments? And again, most importantly, would students be missing out?

Although some participants did not use the term EXED to talk about the topic, they still offered rich and robust understandings. It would seem then, from this case, that one cannot produce direct correlations between the use of "proper" language and "better understanding." This may perhaps point to a fallacy within the notion that educators can utilize experiential theory more effectively when a common language and understanding exists in the community of education providers. Thus, one of the most important lessons that has been learned from this study is that each terminology for and understanding of EXED within the Yukon education system has value. From this lesson, I believe that the best course of action then, for those interested, is to engage in the sharing of ideas related to EXED.

The recommendation may be an effective approach for recognizing EXED's multiple meanings; it may, from another perspective, present an administrative challenge. For example, some participants of this study claimed that schools are occasionally

challenged in their attempts to access funding for experiential programming because their proposed projects do not meet the YDE's criteria of an EXED-based program. A number of participants also expressed a need for the YDE to offer a working definition and vision for EXED in Yukon schools. For some, accessing funding is a challenge because a YDE vision and definition either does not exist or is unknown to some. Thus, I have also learned that, from an administrative perspective, a YDE working definition and vision of EXED should be available to all schools and teachers, especially to those who have little or no experience with offering EXED.

Finally, while it would be absurd for me to suggest a possible vision or definition for what EXED should be in Yukon schools, I would like to proffer some insights about what it should **not** be. The participants from this study generally reported that they understand EXED more as a methodology than a philosophy for learning. It is important to recognize, however, that a couple or a minority of participants did view EXED as a purposeful and intentional philosophy. These participants expressed alignment with Roberts' notions of critical and interactive EXED programming. I would like to encourage those who are and who will be engaging in discussion and idea sharing about EXED to become aware of and to resist migrating toward the type of experiential programming that Roberts criticizes- "neo-experientialism". Roberts characterizes neo-experiential learning experiences as "tightly bounded (in both space and time), rationally constructed, and efficiently controlled. 'Normal' classroom or school activity stops and experiential activity then begins for a bounded and specific timeframe" (p. 29). In essence, superficial, consumptive and uncritical experiences are offered in neatly structured packages that often deny learners the opportunity for creation, participation

and in-depth reflection (Roberts). Resistance to this "pre-packaging" of experiential programs will have to exist both in YDE visions and definitions and in the sharing of ideas within and between schools.

Level of coordination dictates challenges and supports.

In general, EXED in Yukon K-12 schools in primarily driven by bottom-up, school or teacher driven initiatives and is supported by YDE tools and resources. There is also evidence to support the claim that certain supports and certain challenges exist because of this particular environment of shared responsibility. Thus, as Fullan (2001) suggests, the level of coordination between the players involved in educational change dictates the existence of challenges and supports. This lesson from the Yukon case is supported by participant responses claiming that, for example, the YDE provides schools with funding and mentorship because the YDE is aware of the need for such supports. This coordination between the YDE and its schools has been ongoing since the inception of the EXED movement in Yukon Schools over twenty years ago. The process of implementing EXED is not, however, coordinated perfectly, as there are also certain challenges. Fullan (1998) argues that for educational change to be successful, top-down and bottom-up strategies need to be coordinated in a manner that encourages the development of rapport between the two levels.

Fullan (2001) also suggests that development of professional learning communities is essential. Fullan refers to this development as "reculturing" (p. 582). This process involves an increase in colleague collaboration and a change in instructional methods (Fullan). It appears then that one recommendation from this learned lesson can be connected to the recommendation of the previous section. More specifically, an

increase in colleague collaboration is synonymous with the notion of sharing ideas about EXED, as discussed previously. In light of the specific challenges to EXED implementation that have come to light through this case, it is also recommended that the YDE perform a needs assessment amongst it schools to begin to explore how the department can address some of the challenges. If the YDE chooses to pursue a path of increased involvement in EXED programming, the advice of both teachers from this study should be heeded. The teachers cautioned the YDE to avoid a full take over of responsibilities and to, instead, ask, "how can we help?"

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Appendix A: Research Timeline

TIMELINE:

January '09-April '10	*Document collection
June 24 '09	*Attained ethics clearance from Brock University
Sept. 23 '09	*Attained ethics clearance from Yukon Department of Education
October '09	*Identified initial study site and participant and initiated preliminary contact
Nov. '09-Apr. '10	*Conducted all teacher, principal and staff member interviews
Nov. '09-Jun. '10	* Transcribed all interviews
June '10	*Offered transcript review to participants
June '10-Nov.'10	*Conducted data analysis of interviews and documents *Wrote results and discussion chapters
Nov. '10-Mar. '11	*Revisions with committee members

Appendix B: Association for Experiential Education's Principles of Practice

The principles of experiential education practice are:

- Experiential learning occurs when carefully chosen experiences are supported by reflection, critical analysis and synthesis.
- Experiences are structured to require the learner2 to take initiative, make decisions and be accountable for results.
- Throughout the experiential learning process, the learner is actively engaged in posing questions, investigating, experimenting, being curious, solving problems, assuming responsibility, being creative, and constructing meaning.
- Learners are engaged intellectually, emotionally, socially, soulfully and/or physically. This involvement produces a perception that the learning task is authentic.
- The results of the learning are personal and form the basis for future experience and learning.
- Relationships are developed and nurtured: learner to self, learner to others and learner to the world at large.
- The educator3 and learner may experience success, failure, adventure, risk-taking and uncertainty, because the outcomes of experience cannot totally be predicted.
- Opportunities are nurtured for learners and educators to explore and examine their own values.
- The educator's primary roles include setting suitable experiences, posing problems, setting boundaries, supporting learners, insuring physical and emotional safety, and facilitating the learning process.
- The educator recognizes and encourages spontaneous opportunities for learning.
- Educators strive to be aware of their biases, judgments and pre-conceptions, and how these influence the learner.
- The design of the learning experience includes the possibility to learn from natural consequences, mistakes and successes.

Note:
1) The priority or order in which each professional places these principles may vary.

2) There is no single term that encompasses all the roles of the participant within experiential education. Therefore, the term "learner" is meant to include student, client, trainee, participant, etc.

3) There is no single term that encompasses all the roles of the professional within experiential education. Therefore, the term "educator" is meant to include therapist, facilitator, teacher, trainer, practitioner, counselor, etc.

Appendix C: Western and Northern Canadian Protocol

Agreement
WESTERN CANADIAN PROTOCOL FOR COLLABORATION IN BASIC EDUCATION
(KINDERGARTEN TO GRADE 12)

AMONG
The Government of Manitoba as represented by the Minister of Education and Training (hereinafter referred to as "Manitoba")
AND
The Government of Saskatchewan as represented by the Minister of Learning (hereinafter referred to as "Saskatchewan")
AND
The Government of British Columbia as represented by the Minister of Education (hereinafter referred to as "British Columbia")
AND
The Government of Yukon Territory as represented by the Minister of Education (hereinafter referred to as "Yukon Territory")
AND
The Government of Northwest Territories as represented by the Minister of Education, Culture and Employment (hereinafter referred to as "NorthwestTerritories")
AND
The Government of Alberta as represented by the Minister of Learning (hereinafter referred to as "Alberta") 1993
AND
The Government of Nunavut as represented by the Minister of Education (hereinafter referred to as "Nunavut") 2000

Preamble
In Canada, provincial responsibility for education was established at confederation to recognize regional differences and to place a high value on developing and adapting policies responsive to local needs and conditions, and administration of programs at the local level.
However, Canadians also have common expectations of education where a collaborative approach is both appropriate and desirable. In this regard, we, the ministers of education of the western provinces and territories, unanimously declare our renewed commitment to leadership in education through collaboration in basic education programs and services. Our central objective is to provide quality education for all students from kindergarten to grade 12.
In acknowledging our responsibility for leadership in basic education, we fully recognize the role to be played by others including students, teachers, parents, trustees, professional organizations, interest groups and individual citizens.

1. Protocol

WHEREAS the ministers of education of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon unanimously agree to collaborate in basic education; and
WHEREAS, the ministers of education (the parties):
* share many common educational goals and acknowledge the task of ensuring greater harmonization of ways to achieve them
* want to have high standards in basic education
* want to have in place an array of educational opportunities in basic education and want to remove obstacles to their accessibility for any individual learner; and
WHEREAS, there is concern for making optimum use of limited educational resources;
THEREFORE, the parties agree as follows:

1.0 - to cooperate on matters relating to the basic education for students from kindergarten to grade 12.

1.1 - to identify means by which the parties can significantly enhance current efforts to work together in the following areas:
* curriculum in the English language
* curriculum in the French language
* curriculum in languages other than English or French
* distance learning and technology
* special education
* student assessment and standards of student performance
* aboriginal (Native) education, including teacher education
* teacher preparation and certification

1.2 - to explore future possibilities for cooperation among the parties

1.3 - to identify and support means by which the parties and their educational institutes and agencies may foster high quality initiatives in the above areas through the combined efforts of the parties, the institutes and their agencies

1.4 - to encourage the establishment of means for exchanging information electronically and in other ways among the parties, their educational institutes and agencies

1.5 - to encourage and support the spirit and intent of this Protocol.

2.0 Operations and Procedures

2.1 - Working groups will be established as set out in the attached Schedule A, comprised of representatives of each party to this Agreement, responsible for:
a) developing the operational procedures required to give effect to the provisions of the Protocol, and
b) proposing specific projects or initiatives that are approved by the parties.

2.2 - The lead parties, identified in Schedule A, will be responsible for establishing and coordinating the working groups. Each party will decide if it wants to participate in a working group.

2.3 - Priority will be given to projects and initiatives that meet the needs of the six parties. Each party will decide if it wants to participate in a particular project.

2.4 - Work on projects and initiatives will be by consensus among the parties.

2.5 - Human and financial resources and responsibility for a given project will be determined by the participating parties with the advice of the working groups.

2.6 - Responsibility for directing a project will be determined by the parties, providing that the designated party is willing to accept the assignment. If possible, projects will be assigned to each party in turn.

2.7 - Resources, expertise, and organizations from western Canada and the territories will be given first consideration in performing all project work, but consideration also will be given to the use of resources, expertise and organizations elsewhere in Canada.

2.8 - The deputy ministers of the participating parties will approve each project plan and will resolve problems that may arise in the implementation of a project plan.

2.9 - A party may terminate its participation in this Protocol by giving three hundred sixty-five (365) days written notice to all other parties of its intention to do so.

2.10 - This Protocol may be executed in any number of counterparts. Each executed counterpart shall be deemed to be an original all executed counterparts taken together shall constitute one agreement.

This is Schedule "A" of the Western Canadian Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education dated ____ day of _____ , 1993, and shall be considered part of that Protocol.

WORKING GROUPS TERMS OF REFERENCE
Working groups, comprised of representatives of each party to this Agreement, will be set up in the following areas to carry out the provisions of this Protocol:

1. Curriculum in the English language, including but not limited to:

1.1 selection of learning and teaching resources

1.2 common essential learnings

1.3 mathematics K-12 pilot curriculum

Lead parties:
* Manitoba
* Alberta and Northwest Territories (Item 1.3)

2. Curriculum in the French language
Lead party:
* Manitoba

3. Curriculum in languages other than English or French
Lead parties:
* Saskatchewan and Alberta

4. Distance learning and technology
Lead party:
* Alberta

5. Special education
Lead party:
* Saskatchewan

6. Student assessment and standards of student performance
Lead party:
* British Columbia

7. Aboriginal (Native) education, including aboriginal teacher education
Lead parties:
* Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Northwest Territories.

8. Teacher preparation and certification
Lead parties:
* Manitoba and Yukon

The working groups will:
1. Provide a comprehensive focus on the above areas of basic education for departments of education in western Canada and the territories. The comprehensive nature of this role is especially vital to complement other mechanisms for collaboration on an interprovincial/territorial basis, such as the Council of Ministers of Education Canada (CMEC).

2. Provide specific mechanisms for educational institutions and agencies to consult and cooperate on matters affecting the above areas of basic education.

3. Develop the operational procedures required to give effect to the provisions of the Protocol including identifying lead party(ies) for specific projects.

4. Propose specific project plans that are approved by the deputy ministers of the participating parties.

5. Recommend new areas for cooperation among the parties.

6. Consider both Formal and Interest topics consistent with the intent of the Protocol.
- Formal topics refer to those of immediate significance which require formal recommendation to the deputy ministers of education of the western provinces and territories.
- Interest topics refer to developments which are of current interest and potentially have implications for basic education.

Appendix D: Letter of Invitation

[TO BE PRINTED ON BROCK LETTERHEAD]

[insert date]

Title of Study: A Case Study of the Implementation of Experiential Education in Yukon K-12 Schools

Principal Investigator: Jarod Chinnick, Master of Arts student, Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, Brock University

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Mary Breunig, Assistant Professor, Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, Brock University

I, Jarod Chinnick, a Master of Arts student in the faculty Applied Health Sciences faculty, from the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, Brock University, invite you to participate in a research project entitled 'A Case Study of the Implementation of Experiential Education in Yukon K-12 Schools'.

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to describe and explore the supporting and limiting factors Yukon teachers and principals experience as they endeavor to implement opportunities for experiential education in Yukon K-12 schools.

The expected duration of your participation will consist primarily of a 1.5 hour in-person interview, at an agreed upon date and at an agreed upon location. In addition, after the interview has been transcribed, you will be the offered the opportunity to review your transcript for accuracy. Finally, a follow-up interview will take place if you wish to be interviewed again to make clarifications to your initial interview.

This research could benefit YDE teachers, principals and staff members by providing multi-faceted insight into the process of implementing EXED in Yukon K-12 schools. Practically speaking, the results will hopefully contribute to building upon the current successes and also to enumerate ways in which challenges can be overcome in offering EXED programming. The YDE may benefit by becoming more aware of their facilitation of EXED programming and could then build upon current practices.

I will be conducting interviews at one other Yukon school and with Yukon Department of Education staff members.

If you have any pertinent questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Brock University Research Ethics Officer (905 688-5550 ext 3035, reb@brocku.ca)

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you

Jarod Chinnick
Mary Breunig
Master of Arts Student
Phone: (519) 354-9870
Ext..5387
E-Mail: jarod.chinnick@brocku.ca
mary.breunig@brocku.ca

Faculty Supervisor: Dr.

Assistant Professor
Phone: (905) 688-5550

E-Mail:

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through Brock University's Research Ethics Board (file # XXX]

Appendix E: Letter of Informed Consent

Date: (Insert Date)
Project Title: A Case Study of the Implementation of Experiential Education in Yukon K-12 Schools

Principal Investigator: Jarod Chinnick
Master of Arts Student
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
Brock University
jarod.chinnick@brocku.ca

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Mary Breunig
Assistant Professor
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
Brock University
(905) 688-5550 Ext. 5387
mbreunig@brocku.ca

INVITATION

You are invited to participate in a study that involves research. The purpose of this study is to describe and explore the various ways in which Yukon teachers and principals are experiencing successes and challenges in offering the Yukon Department of Education's recommended opportunities for experiential education in K-12 schools..

WHAT'S INVOLVED

As a participant, you will be asked to participate in a 1.5 hour in-person interview, at an agreed upon date and at an agreed upon location. This interview will be audio tape recorded so that it can be transcribed at a later date. In addition, after the interview has been transcribed, you will be the offered the opportunity to review your transcript for accuracy. Finally, a follow-up interview will take place if you wish to be interviewed again to make clarifications to your initial interview.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS

This research could benefit YDE teachers, principals and staff members by providing insight into the process of implementing the YDE recommendations for EXED in K-12 schools. Practically speaking, the results will hopefully contribute to building upon the current successes and also to enumerate ways in which challenges can be overcome. There are no known or anticipated risks associated with participation in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information you provide will be kept confidential. Because the interview will be audio taped, the recorded interview data will not be anonymous. However, your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study.
I will be choosing participants based on referrals from YDE staff members and principals. Research participants will be asked to refer the researcher to other potential participants. Specifically, referrers will be asked to suggest more candidates than is necessary to develop a pool of potential participants. I will then choose from that pool of potential participants. In taking this approach, I am attempting to ensure that referrers do not know who is chosen for an interview. Please be aware that you have been identified as a potential participant by another participant in this study.

In addition, please be advised that there may be a certain level of social risk involved. As this study attempts to understand the process of implementing experiential education in Yukon Schools, negative and positive aspects may be explored. You may decline to respond to any part of the interview process.
Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will offer you the opportunity to review your transcript. If you choose to do so, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish.
Data collected during this study will be stored in a locked cabinet in the supervisor's office. Data will be kept for seven years after which time your interview data will be destroyed and disposed of. Access to this data will be restricted to the principal investigator and the faculty supervisor only.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION
Participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish, you may decline to answer any questions or participate in any component of the study. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time and may do so without any penalty.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS
Results of this study may be published in professional journals and presented at conferences. Feedback about this study will be available from the faculty supervisor, Dr. Mary Breunig, in the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies, at Brock University. Dr. Mary Breunig can be contacted via the information listed above. Feedback will be available in writing or via conversation starting November 2009

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE
If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact the Principle Investigator or the Faculty Supervisor using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at Brock University (insert file #). If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 688-5550 Ext. 3035, reb@brocku.ca.

Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

CONSENT FORM
I agree to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I wanted about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date:

_____

Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish.

Appendix F: Interview Guide

INTERVIEWS WITH YDE STAFF MEMBERS:

-What is your role as a staff member of the YDE?
    -Role related to EXED
-How many years have you been involved with the YDE?
    -How many years with EXED focus to your work?
-Would you prefer that we use EXED, EL or another word for this topic in our discussion?
    -How do you define or understand it?
-Can you tell me about the history of EXED in Yukon Schools?
-How would you describe the current condition of the EXED environment in Yukon schools?
-Is EXED as a teaching and learning philosophy suitable for Yukon schools?
    -Why/ why not?
-How is EXED expressed in YDE policy, mandate or vision/ mission statement, if at all?
-How do you interpret the claims made in the *Ed reform report* and the *one vision, multiple pathways report* that an increase in EXED programming should be a continued part of Yukon educational change or reform?
-How does the YDE facilitate the implementation of EXED based teaching and learning?
    -How are teachers made aware of YDE intentions to offer EXED programming?
    -How are teachers prepared for teaching with an EXED focus?
    -Does EXED focused programming require more support and resources?
        -What is provided by the YDE?
            -Probe: funding, mentors, admin support, teacher training
-Often, changes like these are driven from the 'top down', from the 'bottom up', or a combination of both: Can you describe how EXED programming in Yukon schools fits into this idea?
    -Where would you locate the driving force if you pictured the change on a spectrum with bottom-up on one end and top-down on the other?
-Can you describe a couple of examples of how the YDE has supported successful EXED programs in Yukon schools?
-Within the current state of EXED programming, are there challenges that exist for those who are implementing or who may wish to implement EXED programming?
    -What are those Challenges?
-Can you describe any examples of how you/teachers/principals have been challenged/ limited in attempts to implement EXED programming?
-Is there room for the YDE to improve its practices for facilitating the implementation of EXED programming?
    -How?
-My intention from here is to choose two schools within the Whitehorse area that will provide me with a chance to learn about the process of EXED implementation. These schools, and their teachers and principals, need not necessarily be offering the most or the best examples of EXED programming. Rather, I am seeking to interview the staff

members, teachers and principals who have had the most experience in attempting to offer EXED programming.

-Could you make three suggestions in order of relevance?

-Is there anything more you would like to add to our discussion?

INTERVIEWS WITH YDE TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS:

-What is your job with the YDE?

-How many years have you been in your profession?

-All with YDE?

-Would you prefer that we use EXED, EL or another word for this topic in our discussion?

-How do you define or understand it?

-Do you practice in this way?

-What is your understanding of the YDE's intention for increasing EXED programming in K-12 schools?

-Do you employ/ support EXED as a teaching methodology in your class/ school?

-Is EXED as a teaching and learning philosophy suitable for Yukon schools?

-Why/ why not?

-How is EXED expressed in YDE policy, mandate or vision/ mission statement, if at all?

-Tell me about how the YDE facilitates the implementation of EXED opportunities?

-What support is provided?

-What role do principals and administrators play in the offering of EXED opportunities?

-Tell me about some of the successes you've had with offering EXED programming

-What factors contributed to your success?

-How were these factors influential in your success?

-Tell me about some of the challenges/ barriers you've faced in offering EXED programming

-What factors contributed to you feeling challenged, if so?

-How were these factors influential in you feeling challenged?

-Often, changes like these are driven from the 'top down', from the 'bottom up', or a combination of both: Can you describe how EXED programming in Yukon schools fits into this idea?

-Where would you locate the driving force if you pictured the change on a spectrum with bottom-up on one end and top-down on the other?

-Is there room for the YDE to improve its practices for facilitating the implementation of EXED programming?

-Is there anything else you would like to add?